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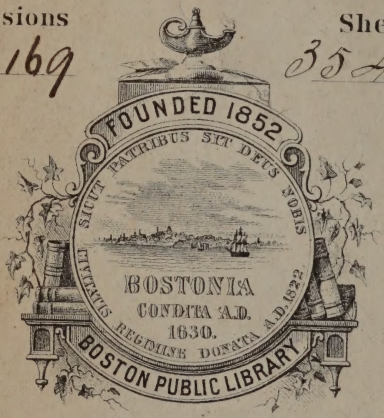

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OUR NEW DEPARTURE:

OR,

THE METHODS AND WORK

OF THE

UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF AMERICA,

AS IT ENTERS ON

ITS SECOND CENTURY.

1411-26

BY

ELBRIDGE GERRY BROOKS, D. D.,

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PHILADELPHIA.

"Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

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TO

Carrie:

OUR BEAUTIFUL MEMORY

ON EARTH;

OUR FLOWN 'DOVE' AWAITING US

IN HEAVEN.

PREFACE.

THIS book was planned early in 1871, and was to have been published a few months after. I regret that it could not have been so published. But under the peremptory order of my physician, I was compelled as nearly as possible to suspend all mental labor during the fall and winter of 1871–72, and much of the ensuing spring. In August following, my eyes failed, and during the autumn and early winter, when I had hoped to finish the work, no reading or writing was permitted me. Except for these causes, the book would have appeared much closer upon our Centenary Year, and ere the leading title had become so nearly hackneyed. But though the title — selected, I may be excused for saying, a considerable time before I had ever seen it used in such an application — has lost in freshness, it has lost nothing in significance; and though our Centenary is three years behind us, we are still so on the threshold of our Second Century, that the book is no less appropriate as an attempt to indicate something of what our methods and work should be as we enter upon it.

I make no apology for these pages. For nearly forty years, a humble participant in our church-work, I have been not only an observer, but a student of our denominational life — our condition, hinderances, needs, prospects. I have watched events, and tried to trace effects to causes. These pages record my conclusions — conclusions carefully, some of them, unwillingly, reached. I wish the presentation had been better done. But for the conclusions themselves, I plead neither explanation, nor excuse. They are, I believe, in the main, impregnable. As such, it is my profound conviction, they are what Universalists need, beyond everything else, solemnly to ponder. They indicate, I am satisfied, alike the explanations to be considered so far as we have failed to witness the practical religious results we had a right to expect, and the conditions upon which alone any vitalizing and saving influence is possible to us. These being my convictions, I have uttered them as I have; "according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken."

And having so written, I lay this book as an unpretending offering on the altar of our Faith, to suggest what, as it seems to me, the further growth and power of our Church demand. I solicit for it the consideration to which it is entitled by virtue of the importance of the interests it concerns. The offspring of no hasty impulse, or immature thinking, I ask that it be dealt with in no hasty or superficial way. It does but give voice, in such fashion as I

could, to what is deepest — and long has been deepest — in many minds and hearts among us. Not for the sake of speaking, but under an imperative sense of duty, I have spoken frankly, sometimes using "great plainness of speech," though in no instance, I trust, speaking otherwise than courteously and kindly. If any occasion is seen to criticise or disapprove the book, let it be criticised or disapproved in the same spirit. My appeal is to the Bible, and reason, and spiritual law — often to simple common sense. In this court, let whatever issue is raised be fairly tried. I am content to abide the verdict.

Whatever criticism the book may receive, I shall enter into no controversy to defend it. For the reasons already mentioned, growing out of the state of my health and my impaired eyesight, the work has been done, amidst my parish cares, at long intervals of time, and in a broken and desultory manner. These circumstances have not been favorable to connected writing — on which account, any repetitions that may possibly be observed must be pardoned. But as to substance, every sentence has been weighed, and what I have written, is written. I think it sufficiently explains and vindicates itself. Let its mistakes and errors be exposed — and forgotten. Its truth will take care of itself.

With these introductory words, I commend the book to the blessing of God, and to the welcoming sympathy of all who love our Church. May I commend it, also, to the candor and reflection of those who, not Universalists, would know something of Universalism in its present form and tendencies, or who, however they may reject some of our conclusions, would find ground for giving us recognition and fellowship as one of the divisions of Christ's army of redemption? The time, probably, is not far distant when I shall no longer personally labor for our Church on earth. Many years of work for it may be — and if such is God's will, I hope are — before me. I have plans for other pages, which I would gladly be spared to accomplish. But on the western side of the hill, I am not without serious admonitions that my ministry, if not my life, may at any moment be ended. And should either event occur before I can send forth other pages, I know of no form in which I would rather speak my last word than in what is herein said. It is at the same time the utterance of my deepest faith, and a testimony of my love for the Church into which I was born and to which my whole life has been given. Nor, considering what may *possibly* be said by way of objection to this book, can I better close this preface than in words I wrote, in effect, many years ago: — Universalism is the highest concern of the world to me. I know, or wish, no better work than to labor for it while I live; and when I am dead, I desire no higher praise than to have it said of me, Holding it as the Gospel of Christ, he loved and was always faithful to it.

Philadelphia,
November 26, 1873.

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"Come, Holy Spirit, from above,
And from the realms of light and love
Thine own bright rays impart.
Come, Father of the fatherless,
Come, Giver of all happiness,
Come, Lamp of every heart.

"O Thou, of comforters the best,
O Thou, the soul's most welcome guest,
O Thou, our sweet repose,
Our resting-place from life's long care,
Our shadow from the world's fierce glare,
Our solace in all woes.

"O Light divine, all light excelling,
Fill with Thyself the inmost dwelling
Of souls sincere and lowly:
Without thy pure divinity,
Nothing in all humanity,
Nothing is strong or holy.

"Wash out each dark and sordid stain,
Water each dry and arid plain,
Raise up the bruised reed.
Enkindle what is cold and chill,
Relax the stiff and stubborn will,
Guide those that goodness need.

"Give to the good, who find in Thee
The Spirit's perfect liberty,
Thy seven-fold power and love.
Give virtue strength its crown to win,
Give struggling souls their rest from sin,
Give endless peace above."

VENI, SANCTE SPIRITUS,
Dean Stanley's Translation.

OUR NEW DEPARTURE.

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW DEPARTURE.

Every live movement, in proportion as it is alive, enlarges as it proceeds. And so enlarging, it necessarily creates constantly new circumstances, out of which grow fresh demands.

The important question concerning every such movement, therefore, is, How far will it successively adjust itself to these new circumstances, and meet these fresh demands? On the answer to this question, under God, the final breadth and power of the movement wholly depend.

Principles never change. Neither do the ultimate purposes of any enterprise whose relations and issues have, at the outset, been fully perceived. But methods, instruments, directions of labor, bases of operation must perpetually change, or weakness and failure ensue. No wise commander adheres to any line of march save only with reference to his objective point. His tactics vary with the progress and varying exigencies of the campaign. Every day he studies the situation, to determine his strategy accordingly. New departures, by flank, detour, or advance, are made after every fight. How else do campaigns end in victory? Or, who doubts the consequence should any commander obstinately persist that, as he began, so, in every particular, he must push on? As little is victory possible for any movement that aims at growth or conquest, except on similar terms.

The Universalist movement is no exception to these necessities. Of the nature or importance of this movement it is not requisite here to speak at length. It is enough to say that no reasonable words can exaggerate what it is, what it has done, or what it may do. Broadly viewed, it is, intellectually and morally, the grandest movement of these last centuries. Since Luther, there is nothing comparable to it. It was the resurrection of the long-slumbering moral consciousness of the Church. It was reason and common sense once more re-asserting themselves amidst the contradictions and absurdities of the creeds. Beginning as a protest of the uneducated popular heart against the cold and cruel scholasticism of the traditional theology, and providentially designed to give the world a more humane and harmonious interpretation of the Gospel, it has swept, a modifying and reconstructive power, through the realm of opinion, and spread as a subtile influence, for the most part unrecognized, but none the less actual, permeating society with broader principles, and a tenderer and more sympathetic spirit, to an extent that no human foresight could have dared anticipate. When JOHN MURRAY was being stoned in Boston, or when his friends in Gloucester, or, later still, the handful of Universalists in New Hampshire, were battling before the courts for their rights as a distinct denomination, had some one ventured to predict that in the year 1870 Universalism would have so leavened the country, including even the churches, or that THE UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF AMERICA would to-day be what it is in all the elements of Christian power, none would have been more ready than the Universalists themselves to pronounce him wildly visionary. What has thus been realized, seen and unseen, considering the circumstances, is almost without parallel. All honor to those who, in any way, have helped to make the movement thus potent. A brave and sturdy company, for the most part, they have been. Seldom has any work had workmen braver, or more deserving the world's remembrance.

But, exalted as are the terms in which this movement is to be spoken of, and much as all interested in it have occasion to be proud of the record which, in most respects, it

has made for itself, it is obvious, in the nature of the case, that, if it is to continue effective, its methods must change with the changed circumstances it has helped to create. What *has been* cannot suffice for what *is*, or is *to be;* nor can the experiment of making it suffice be insisted on, except at the peril of the whole movement as thus far organized.

At first, our work was of necessity controversial. Occupied as the religious field was, our call was to assail and denounce — to oppose, dispute, pull down. We were nothing if not aggressive. As the consequence, we have arraigned, discussed and controverted the old theology as none others have been willing to do. We have exposed its sophisms; have made manifest its inconsistencies and contradictions; have denounced the grossness of its barbarous principles, and the fallacy of its narrow assumptions. We have wrested from it the Scriptures it has misapplied, and have demonstrated by our reiterated expositions — reiterated, as some have thought, to very weariness — how positively the Bible announces quite other conclusions. We have shown how reason and conscience, and nature and Providence, and every humane instinct, array themselves against it. In few words, we have so kept in agitation this entire question of God, and man, and destiny, in all its intellectual, moral, and scriptural aspects and relations, as to compel the public attention to it. We have had allies, it is true. We readily concede all that can be justly claimed for them. But, without stopping now to enumerate them, or to analyze the precise ratio of their and our comparative influence, it is not too much to allege that we have accomplished more than any other one agency — probably more than all other agencies combined. There could have been no Ward Beecher without Hosea Ballou. The result is obvious. That single name — Ward Beecher — better symbolizes it than whole volumes could describe it. 'Orthodoxy' still has its nominal believers — many of them; and considerable numbers, despite the growing breadth and liberality, adhere immovably to the ancient standards. Dr. Hodge's "Systematic Theology," and the recent action of little knots of ministers in various localities, are among the latest, as they

are sufficient, witnesses of this ; and, looking at catechisms and text-books, we may still find many of them as harsh as ever. But the sway of the sacrificial system is none the less broken. Dr. Hodge's book and the ministerial demonstrations no doubt have sympathizers ; and there are those who are satisfied with the catechisms and the text-books, or they could not hold their place ; but they are anachronisms, nevertheless — as little in keeping with the existing drift of popular and church thought as Dr. Emmons's cocked hat and knee-breeches, if to-day reproduced, would be with the present style of dress, or as some extinct monster of the Silurian epoch, should it return to perambulate our city streets, would be with the life amidst which it would walk. Speaking of those portions of the country where our — and other — modifying influences have really asserted themselves, how many minds, at all considerate, do not now revolt from the doctrines which Dr. Hodge is so grimly re-affirming? How many are now affrighted with visions of God's implacable wrath, or with the smoke and flames of an endless hell? How many, who actually think of God at all, now ever think of Him as an arbitrary Sovereign, creating souls on purpose to damn them forever, or as a Being who is weakly permitting the larger portion of His creation to drift to helpless ruin? Notwithstanding the creeds and catechisms, He is now practically thought of as the merciful Friend and Father of all ; and the number of intelligent people — in the fields referred to — who, without question or reservation, believe in the absolute endlessness of sin and suffering, is comparatively very small. What is the significance of the ministerial demonstrations, — so far as they have any significance, — except that they point to these facts? Perhaps the state of the public mind, in the churches and out, in these respects, has never before been put to so significant a test as by the recent books of George Macdonald, especially his "Robert Falconer." This book is an express onslaught against all that is characteristic in 'orthodoxy' and is not only saturated with the spirit of Universalism, but is full of vigorous and unanswerable arguments for it. But who, or how many, have objected to it on these accounts? Newspapers and reviews of all shades of opinion have praised it.

The most strenuously 'evangelical' pastors have advised their people to read it; and thousands, of all names and sects, have taken it to their hearts as an exceeding refreshment and joy. Could this have been forty, or even twenty, years ago? Look, too, at the new departure which 'orthodoxy' has made in the welcome which all the churches are willing to give to Universalists, notwithstanding their Universalism; in the readiness of some of them to tolerate it even in their ministers; and in the larger and kindlier fellowship for Universalists which is finding so many advocates. I know a prominent Methodist church in whose Sabbath-school an avowed Universalist is the teacher of one of the Bible-classes; and the significance of the ordination of the Rev. Mr. Jackson among the Congregationalists, and of the debate among them and others whether the doctrine of endless woe is, in any real sense, essential, is too clear to be mistaken. The old rigors, to a wide extent, have undeniably softened.

The circumstances amidst which we have to work, then, being so changed, the direction and methods of our work, manifestly, if we are to work to best effect, must be modified accordingly. Argument and exposition, attack and defence, are unquestionably still required as much as ever in some localities—in all localities on some occasions. But these are no longer our chief business. As well might one persist in swinging his axe when only an occasional tree is to be felled, and when his pressing need is to till his ground for harvests. Not that we have been altogether negligent of harvests. It is sometimes charged that we have been; and writers and speakers of our own have not been lacking, who, in a culpable neglect to qualify and discriminate, have joined in the charge. But any such representation, come it whence it may, is false, and does us great injustice. We have had earnest affirmative aims; and our organization, now so complete, but attained only after so many years of struggle and experiment, is demonstrative proof that we have sought to build as well as to tear down. But what harvests have we chiefly cultivated? To what ends have we mainly built? For the awakening of the thoughtless? For the conversion of sinners? For the salvation of souls?

For these ends to some extent, certainly; and those there have been among us — in number not a few — second to none in the devotion and energy with which they have given themselves to such work. But can it be said that this has been the general animus, the *characteristic* spirit of our Universalist effort? On the contrary, while it would be slanderous to say that there has been no thought — or even to say that there has not been a good deal of thought — among us with reference to these ends, has not our labor, as the rule, concerned *doctrines* more than *souls*, except, of course, as it has always been understood that it is for the interest of souls to know the truth? Has not our effort been to convince the head that 'orthodoxy' is not true, and that God is good, and that all men are to be saved, rather than so to present the fact of God's persistent and pleading love, and of the ultimate repentance and obedience of all, as to convict the heart of sin, to quicken the conscience to a sense of guilt, and to bring the people, in penitence and a confession of personal need and obligation, to their knees? In a word, has not our labor been *theological* more than *experimental*, aiming to make Christian Universalists, and to build and consolidate a Universalist denomination, rather than to make Universalist Christians, compacted and consecrated in the Universalist Church? It is believed that no contradiction is hazarded in saying that these last questions can be truthfully answered only in the affirmative. The deepest and most interior meanings of Christ's work have never been wholly overlooked among us; but, as the rule, we have given more attention to the fact that he is to save, than to the question, How?

When I entered the ministry (1836), and for several years after, I found few with any clear and settled answer for this question, *How?* — for the reason that it was generally held to be of only incidental importance; and I well remember with what a trembling sense of treading on very uncertain — and almost forbidden — ground, I ventured once to read an essay in which — in a very crude way, as I now see — I had tried to work out some answer to this question for my own satisfaction. It was not until some time after the publication of Dr. Ballou's weighty and every way admirable

paper on "The New Testament Doctrine of Salvation," in the "Expositor" of January, 1840, that the misty and incoherent state of thought on this subject began to give place to a more distinct and intelligent view. And even since, as before, that paper — which did more than any other one thing to clarify and systematize our denominational thinking on this point — the very large proportion of our ministers and people have been much more occupied with the *certainty* than with the *method* of salvation. God and what He has purposed, rather than man and the conditions which he must fulfil, have constituted the burden of our thought; and while our pulpit — from which have spoken a succession of men, as a whole, second to no others in purity and unselfish zeal — has been filled with argument in the direction of faith, more than with unction in the direction of conversion and work, our people have been intelligent, conscientious, benevolent, morally reputable, comfortably confident that everything is to come out rightly at last, rather than pious, prayerful, spiritually vital, eagerly asking, "Men and brethren, what shall *we* do?"

Nor, however much there may be in all this to regret, could it, in the nature of the case, have been otherwise. Consider the facts. The entire theory of God and the universe, when our movement began, and for many subsequent years, was such as to insult every rational and moral instinct, and to render all that bore the name of religion unattractive, if not a disgust. Chiefest of all, perhaps, an appalling uncertainty hung over the future. Nothing was definite. Above no grave could a sure word of prophecy be uttered. Not even to the saintliest soul, it was thought, was there authority to say, "Fear not:" for time and eternity, God is your Friend. Ours it was to pour light into this darkness. The word providentially put upon our lips was, Look up: God rules in infinite love, and Christ, as his messenger, will *certainly* triumph. Was it strange that, at first, we were mainly engrossed with the errors we opposed, and the glad tidings we proclaimed? Recalling how we were not only doctrinally assailed, but personally maligned, misrepresented, denounced as the religious pariahs of the country, the enemies of God and all good, would it not

have been remarkable if we had had much thought for anything save the assertion and justification of our truth on the one hand, and the arraignment of 'orthodoxy' and its mischievous power on the other? And, full of our message of *certainty*, as we had occasion to be amidst the prevailing suspense and gloom, is it surprising that we did not always stop carefully to weigh in detail all the conditions involved in the result we heralded, or to emphasize the personal spiritual necessities it imposed?

But it is one of God's methods that every work educates its workers. So our work has been educating us. More and more, as the years have passed, the conditions upon which all moral results depend have been asserting themselves in our thought. The question, How? or, What have *we* to do? has commanded continually increasing attention. And now, entering upon the second century of our history, we have, as a body, very generally reached conclusions in the light of which the answer to this question assumes momentous importance. What we are at this point to determine is, whether or not this answer shall have the enforcement its importance calls for. Not that we are to lose any interest in the grand fact in which Universalism culminates. We are to abate nothing from the emphasis or the constancy with which we proclaim it. To do so would be to abandon the position we have conquered, and to relinquish the chief element of our power. The Gospel of Jesus Christ, without the doctrine of his certain ultimate triumph in the conquest of sin and the reconciliation of all souls to God, is the arch without the keystone, is the lever without the fulcrum, is the sky without the sun, is the body without the soul. But, while this result must still have its due place, its cognate — and, in their place, no less important — facts must have greater prominence. What is to precede this result, and what, therefore, it implies as an antecedent experience and purpose in every soul, must be more urgently pressed. In other words, the demand is that, more keenly apprehending and appreciating the innermost significance and personal requirements of the truth we teach, we shall take another step forward in the adoption of such methods of labor as the spiritual facts underlying what

we affirm suggest and require; and on our decision in respect to this demand our future influence and fortune as a Church are suspended.

Another step forward, I say; for it is no new thing for us to take a "new departure" denominationally. As was intimated in opening, it is the law of all live movements thus to go forward by stages, either because principles are gradually more clearly perceived, or because of a ripening understanding as to the best instruments. There were such new departures in the apostolic church, as when Peter, after the vision of the sheet, went and preached to Cornelius and his friends; as when Paul and Barnabas, being rejected of the Jews, "turned to the Gentiles." Every church which has grown in the apprehension of its truth, or profited by its experience, has had similar new departures. We have had them with the rest. Let us look back a moment, and see what they have been.

There are *four* well-defined periods in the history of our Church, each successively marking the new departures we have made: — 1. The patristic period, during which the whole type of thought and faith was 'orthodox,' with the single exception of the doctrine of universal salvation; 2. The period of transition, extending from 1795 to (perhaps) 1818, during which the 'orthodox' type of faith was supplanted by the Unitarian theory of God and the atonement, and related points (so making us the first body of Unitarian Christians in the country), the doctrine of "future punishment" being still retained; 3. The Ballouian period, extending from 1817–18 to (perhaps) 1845, during which the influence of Mr. Ballou was dominant, and his theory as to the immediate felicity of all souls at death became the general sentiment of our body; 4. The period of reaction, extending from 1845 to the present time, during which Father Ballou's theory has, in its turn, been generally superseded, and, as Dr. Ballou once phrased it, "the current of opinion has run in favor of a moral connection of the present life with the future."

Here, then, we have four distinct departures: — the first, our departure from 'orthodoxy,' and each of the others a departure, quite as marked, from ground we had been occu-

pying, to a new position. Each of these was an advance. Putting their own interpretation upon them, our friends of other churches talk much of our shifting theology; and, suiting themselves in their assumptions thereupon, they moralize, greatly to their own satisfaction, on the instability of error, holding up their hands in wonder at the fatuity which imagines that a system so vacillating can have any future. It is easy at any time to retort by pointing these friends to their own shifting positions, some of them fatal to the very substance of their theology. But, not now to step aside for this, it is sufficient to say that these several departures warrant no such unfavorable inferences. They are only the stages through which our Church has grown into the perception of the adjuncts and relations of its basic truth. It is the fortune of all truth, history teaches, to be progressively perceived and formulated. The apostles walked personally with Christ as their instructor, but who of them at once understood the spiritual and universal purpose of the Gospel? So with Luther's followers: how many on the instant took in the full scope of his principles, or the meaning of his work? And so of all crusades against error or wrong, and all moral or spiritual reforms. Of which of them, that has attained any considerable proportions, has the deepest significance ever been perceived by those who have first burned and thrilled with its new message, or fought and 'roughed it' in its earlier battles? In common with all great movements of thought, or religious life, we, as a Church, have only illustrated the natural order of things.

We have not happened. Nothing in our history is the result of accident. We have come of laws as absolute as gravitation, or any law of growth; and these successive changes or departures simply show how Universalism has been historically developed. They indicate no modification of final principles, and therefore justify no reflections as to the fickleness of our theology in respect to such principles. They only show the different phases of interpretation and statement in which other and more purely modal principles have been held upon these as their common foundation, much as the varieties of soil and vegetable growth on the globe have no significance as to what is primary in its struc-

ture, only as to what has, from time to time, been deposited upon its surface. Whether God exists in one or in three persons or manifestations; whether he is so sovereign that all human action is necessitated, or so sovereign as to leave action free; whether sin is exclusively of the flesh, or of the soul; whether the character we here form has all its moral importance in this world, or goes, with its consequences, into the future, — these and like inquiries are very grave, and, in a sense, vital. But they are not primal; they do not touch bottom, like those which concern the character of God, and the spirit and issues of his government. In respect to *these*, Universalism has never changed. On other points, differences have been numerous, and opinion has fluctuated, and our theology has been protean in its forms, so that the Universalist Church has, at various periods, stood for quite diverse ideas. But as regards these final principles, there has been no difference or fluctuation. Murray, and Ballou, and Turner, and Hosea Ballou 2d, and all whom they represent, have clasped hands, in one unbroken line, in the unity of a faith "without variableness, or the shadow of turning;" and, from the hour of its inception till now, the Universalist Church has steadily stood for precisely the same thing, viz., *the impartial and immutable love of God, destined surely to triumph through Christ in the ultimate redemption of all souls.* Our successive departures, it thus appears, have been simply as to the *form*, never as to the *substance*, of faith. Instead, therefore, of furnishing any occasion for adverse criticism, they have quite another meaning. Fossils never grow. Only live things develop and mature. These departures reveal the processes of our spiritual evolution. That reactions, crudities, and various fanciful and extreme opinions, should appear, was inevitable in such a breaking up of old beliefs as the past hundred years have witnessed; and it speaks honorably for the vitality and elasticity of our Church that, amidst these things, while immovably fixed as to our fundamental faith, we have been, each for himself, so free to search God's word, and to follow the light given us. Thus, enslaved by no creeds and hindered by no traditions, thought has clarified, our great principles have gradually

pushed themselves into fuller and clearer expression, the relations and proportions of truth have become more and more manifest, till, as the result, logic, sentiment, the Bible, and spiritual law having contributed each its part, Universalism stands forth rounded and balanced into the coherent and harmonious system it is.

And now, having attained to so much through our several preceding departures, the time — returning to our statement — has fully come for another step forward. Hitherto, our departures have been mainly doctrinal, though naturally they have each somewhat affected our type of life and methods of labor. That to which we are now called is vital and experimental. *It is demanded of us that, having reached certain definite conclusions, we shall distinctly and systematically give ourselves to a style of work and appeal such as they logically suggest and require.* There is no room for doubt as to what has come to be the predominant conviction of our body. It is that death, as such, works no moral change; that character is continuous, except as moral agencies modify it; and that salvation, being a change of character, is possible anywhere only as the result of such agencies, acting through faith and penitence, and inducing self-surrender. There was a period in our history when these were regarded as debatable positions. With the most of us, that period some time ago ceased; and these positions are now held to be axiomatic truths, as little open to legitimate debate or question as the fact that there is such a thing as character, or that mechanical or chemical causes are incompetent to produce moral effects. And, this being so, should not these conclusions give inspiration and purpose to our ministry, and be henceforth the basis of our *systematic* effort as a Church?

Is it said that there are those, — among them brethren honored and beloved, — with their equal rights in our fellowship, who do not yet accept these conclusions? But are these brethren more honored or beloved, or more entitled to hold back our Church from the kind of labor befitting its general convictions, than were Murray and his coadjutors, when, notwithstanding they adhered to the old theories, the denomination, under the lead of Ballou and Turner,

planted itself on the Unitarian platform? or than were Turner, and Dean, and Loveland, and Willis, and Hosea Ballou 2d, and those in sympathy with them, when, following Father Ballou, the denomination so generally committed itself to the 'no-future punishment' theory? The question as to what a church shall do is never — or ought never to be — a question of persons, but always of principles; and the equal rights of those who no longer represent the prevailing sentiment of the body are summed up in the right to hold, and with entire freedom to state and defend, what seems to them the truth. On no just plea, surely, either of courtesy or of right, can the *exceptional* claim to annul or override the *common* in determining the tone and purpose of a church.

It is the law of every developing movement, of whatever nature, that the thought and methods of each stage in its progress must in turn give way to those of the stage succeeding. This has been signally manifest in our history. With its peculiar philosophy and scriptural interpretations, each of our four periods has had its peculiar processes of argument, and, equally, its peculiar methods of labor and appeal. Was it, in either of these periods, in any sense a violation of the rights of — or a disregard of what was due to — those still holding the philosophy and interpretations of former periods, that methods and appeals in keeping with its own convictions were supplanting those of the period preceding? Clearly, the only rule in any such case is that the predominating convictions of a church must of right give character and direction to its life and work.

Hence alike the propriety and necessity of the New Departure herein contemplated. Many among us have already, individually, taken this departure; and the tone and methods of our Church are, in important respects, to-day very different from what they were twenty years ago. But notwithstanding these changes, and though the Ballouian philosophy has been generally discarded, we are still, as a church, mainly in the ruts of the Ballouian period as to methods and appeals. What is now required of us is that we leave these ruts, and, in a concerted and systematic direction of our labor, strike out into aims and efforts better cor-

responding with the existing state of our denominational thought: — just as Murray, Adam Streeter, and Rich followed their convictions, and struck out from orthodoxy; just as Ballou and Turner struck out from Murray; and just as Ballou, loyal to his new views, struck out from himself and Turner. New wine must be put into new bottles; and if, as is indisputable, the current of new or modified conclusions is running through our Church, we must adjust our wheels and give direction to our machinery with distinct reference to the power thus supplied.

Conceding the soundness of these new or modified conclusions, what but this can we do, if, as the stewards of God, we would be faithful? Are we not imperfectly administering the Gospel, and culpably neglecting important spiritual leverage, so far as we fail duly to use the means of influence thus placed at our command? If what is thus affirmed be true, death in itself is a concern only of the body; it interrupts or cancels no spiritual law; and hence nothing is to be expected from it in the way of release from moral penalty, or a more facile admission to the company of the just, since it puts no man into any easier or more desirable relations with God, and absolves no one from any condition on which salvation here depends. The good man disembodied, passing into the more manifest presence of God, loses none of his moral attributes; is a good man there, precisely as he was a good man here — that is, in the activity of his own moral faculties; and because, carrying in himself the harvest of his prayers and saintly endeavors, he still loves and chooses to go forward in the good life. The bad man, just as certainly, passing on in like manner, loses none of his impiety, selfishness, or sin in the passage; is inevitably the same bad man at his first moment of consciousness on the other side as he was at his last moment of consciousness here. He leaves his body behind, but nothing of what he morally was, because character is not of the body, but of the soul. Character, as the one actual thing in us, is to be changed, here or hereafter, only by our own moral choice. Death has no alchemy to touch it. True, death does strip off the flesh, from the suggestions and lusts of which character for evil to some extent here comes, and in the use of

which character here manifests itself. It does introduce us into new circumstances, amidst new, and probably mightier, influences; and precisely how these are to affect us, — of what awakenings and uplifting impulses and resolves they are to be the occasion, or what 'disinthralment of our spiritual powers' is thus to follow, no one can certainly say. It is reasonable to anticipate something from the facts to be thus taken into account, though in respect to these things, he is the wisest man who dogmatizes least. But in itself, death is simply transition, with no transmuting moral efficacy. Except, therefore, as the bad man, passing on, puts off sin and rises into a new character, just as he was called to put off sin and rise into a new character here, the curse of sin, so far as he was a sinner, still abides upon him, and will abide, — perhaps intensified as he stands consciously revealed in the sight of God and before the tribunal of the Saviour.

And these things being true, are they things to be ignored, or put to no use? On the contrary, how grave is their import, and how urgent the need of wise action for ourselves and others which they enforce! We have something, they show us, indefinitely at stake upon the characters we here form. Our salvation, under God, is in our own hands. There is peril in carelessness and sin — not for time only, but beyond. Faith, penitence, and prayer, what we mean by spiritual culture and the Christian life, are not merely things of a few days' concern to us here, to be with impunity balanced against the listlessness, or the imagined pleasures of a worldly or godless life, if we are willing to wait for death to put us right. Death *cannot* put us right; and these are things, therefore, on our wise choice concerning which, here and now, unspeakable interests hang: just as "now, while it is called to-day," our welfare is suspended on any decision we are called to make between right and wrong; just as always something is every hour at stake on our choice of action as to what the next hour our experience and character are to be. Choosing right in respect to God and the Saviour, every day of thoughtfulness and growing spirituality is so much gained towards that life and felicity which are to be perfected in heaven. Choosing wrong, every day

of indifference, unbelief, or sin is a day of darkness, of hardening sensibility, of shrivelling capacity, of increasing spiritual emptiness and death — stretching on, on, so long as our choice is perverse, or we fail to cry out for God, and to turn our faces towards Him. If, then, mere physical paralysis, destitution, blindness, or pain be a thing for us to shrink from ourselves, or demanding our effort for its relief and cure in others, how much more this darkness, poverty, and death of the soul! What penalties such a condition incurs, on the other side of death no less surely than here! What hazards are thus involved! What judgments invited! What losses sustained! What suffering chosen! And all this being granted, is any ministry or any church faithful, which, holding these convictions, declines to conduct its labors and frame its appeals accordingly?

The reference just now made to them sufficiently shows that I am not unmindful of those among us who have not yet accepted this general view, and some of whom oppose it as a serious error. With these brethren, however, I have here no debate. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." I am not now making an argument, — only stating a position, and what consistency with it requires. My concern, therefore, is wholly with those who *do* accept this view, that I may illustrate with what emphasis all such of us are called of God and the welfare of souls, to use the conclusions we have reached, as, if they are true, their importance demands.

We have been, for many years, proceeding upon a false assumption. Contenting ourselves with a general, and often vigorous, enforcement of truth and duty by such sanctions as the present furnishes, we have quite extensively taken it for granted that any attempt to influence conduct by considerations drawn from its consequences, one way or another, *in the future world*, is somehow inconsistent with our fundamental principle that we must do right because it *is* right, and not from any mercenary motive. But what is there to justify this assumption? That we are to do right because it *is* right, is certain. Equally certain is it that to do right, or to abstain from doing wrong, solely because of reward or punishment anywhere, is, in either case, to be a hireling,

rendering to God no acceptable service. But are the consequences of action to be, therefore, put altogether out of the case? Why, then, does God so constantly appeal to them? Is He seeking to determine action on false principles? It is only in view of its consequences that the intrinsic nature of any course is to be best understood. How are pupils fully to appreciate what knowledge and ignorance respectively are, as related to their welfare, if teachers are never to urge them to diligence by explaining the blessings of the former and the penalties of the latter? Or, how are children to understand what industry or virtue is for its own sake, if they are never to be told of the disabilities of poverty, or the advantages of wealth, or if the disgrace and wretchedness of vice, and the beauty and joy of a good life, are to be forbidden themes in their instruction? Universalists have never been backward in proclaiming the certain earthly consequences of action, both of penalty and reward; and if any consequences may be legitimately appealed to, why not all? If consequences here, why not, with equal propriety, — it being granted that there are such, — consequences hereafter? Why should death be the line across which the appeal must not reach? or how can the whole case be fairly made up, either in favor of a Christian life, or against a godless one, except as all that both involve is duly exhibited?

Paul shows us the true method. It is needless to say that he would persuade no man to a mercenary discipleship. It is quite as needless to remind those for whom these chapters are specially penned how decided were his convictions as to the results of God's government. Nothing was more certain to him than that Christ is to "put down all rule, and all authority, and power" antagonistic to God, and that God is thus to be "all in all." In his distinct foresight of this issue, and therefore in the assurance that his "labor was not in vain in the Lord," he found that which constantly sustained and inspired him; which, when he was weak, made him strong, and, amidst hostilities and discouragements, lifted him, unappalled, into victory. But with no less distinctness, he saw, too, the conditions precedent, and his sermons and epistles attest the zeal and constancy with which he empha-

sized these conditions, and with a soul all aglow, called those whom he addressed to the thoughtfulness and effort required. See what he says in his figure of the Christian race, Philippians iii. 7–16; and again, in his First Letter to Timothy, vi. 9–19; and still again, in his Second Epistle, iv. 5–8. See especially the picture he gives of himself, and of his motives, in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, v. 1–11, and particularly in these words: "Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." Repeated attempts have been made to show that this language has no allusion to immortality, and thus to turn aside the point the Apostle makes. As well might one allege that this whole grand connection is only a pleasant talk about an intended visit to some fair island in the Mediterranean! The theme unmistakably is our passage out of the mortal into the immortal realm; and the point is, that there as well as here, an acceptance with Christ is something to be won. This acceptance, the Apostle gives us to understand, does not come as a matter of course. It is not something indiscriminately given, without regard to antecedent conduct or character. It is something accorded only to those who struggle for it. The Apostle represents himself as struggling for it, therefore — in no mercenary spirit, but in a spirit of earnest aspiration towards harmony with God and the Redeemer.

And mark what it is in view of which he not only thus struggles himself, but is moved to persuade and animate others: "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. . . . Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." This does not mean that he had, for the moment, forgotten the love of God, nor that he would frighten anybody into religious living. It means simply that he recognized the continuousness of Christ's offices of instruction and judgment; that he perceived severities as well as tenderness in God's dealings; facts to arouse and startle as well as to attract and comfort. Considering

hese things, and looking forward to the conscious revetation of souls, as, released from the environments of the esh, they pass into the personal presence of the Redeemer, or approval or condemnation according to the character in which they there appear, he caught a new impulse to plead with and persuade men, that they would give themselves n holiness to God.

And administering the same Gospel as Paul, can we do better than to administer it in the same way? He sought not to hire or terrify. Such effort belonged neither to his moral philosophy, nor to his theory of a regenerate life. It belongs as little to ours. It is "the goodness of God" that "leadeth to repentance," he declared; and we accept the statement as the fundamental axiom he meant it to be. The soul is moved for its redemption only by that which awakens conscience and takes hold of the affections. But there is something terrible in a life of sin, in absence from God, in spiritual insensibility, collapse and decay; there is something beautiful and blessed in a life of faith, and love, and heavenly sympathy, and divine communion; and to portray the peril of the one and the attractions of the other, — to emphasize the permanence of spiritual law, and the unescapable certainty of its retributions, — to tell men that God will never deal with them for their salvation in any mechanical way, as if they were *things*, but that they must work out their own salvation, in the use of His helps, as accountable *souls*, — to insist that the consequences of a material or atheistic life must, in the nature of things, continue until such a life, by one's own choice, is repented of and abandoned, — to preach that the judgment-seat of Christ is erected wherever souls are answerable to him, and that, passing out of the flesh, we pass into his immediate presence, to experience in his approval and the spiritual harmonies of our own being, or in his condemnation and our own self-condemnation, the fruits of what we have done and are, — to do either or all of these things is not to attempt to terrify or to hire. It is simply to state facts, as most of us believe — that those whom we seek to influence may be induced to act wisely in view of them. It is, indeed, to proceed upon the identical principle on which those proceed

who most protest against any appeal to consequences in the future world, as often as they take up the burden of the Bible, and say with the prophet, "It shall be well with the righteous, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings," or, "Woe unto the wicked! for the reward of his hands shall be given him."

In view, then, of these several considerations, has not the time fully come when, appreciating the nature of our position, and the demands of the principles and conclusions we hold, we shall go forward in the New Departure which has here been outlined?

Three things are likely to be urged by way of objection: —

1. It will be said by some that we shall thus be 'imitating,' or 'going over to the orthodox.' But for any such plea, I confess my utter want of respect. It has already done us much mischief; and if we have any conscience, or common sense, we shall henceforth treat it with the contempt it deserves. God has given us a work. What is it to us whom we 'imitate,' or to whom we 'go over,' if it is but clear that we are following the indications of His Providence as to the best means of doing it? Our business is to be faithful; and if anywhere there is truth for us to learn, or serviceable action for us to copy, we are recreant to our trust if we do not make the most of it. Who are we that we should assume to be above profiting by the experience of others? Or, who are we that, wherever a truth may be found which we have not accepted, or which for any reason we have failed duly to enforce, we should draw ourselves up in a pompous self-sufficiency, and say, We will have none of it? Our duty is to harvest instruction from every possible field, be it Romanism, or Methodism, Presbyterianism, Episcopalianism, or any other branch of the one common Church of Christ. 'Orthodoxy,' as organized in all these forms, has much to teach us. We shall wickedly stultify ourselves if we refuse to learn.

But the step here advocated is no 'imitation' of anybody, and no 'going over' to anybody. It implies only consistency with the logic of our own convictions. We have our pronounced principles. These involve certain definite practical conclusions; and these, again, suggest

and enjoin certain motives and appeals equally definite. The simple question is, whether we will be true to ourselves and to the interests of souls in the use of the moral instrumentalities thus put into our hands.

There is a sense, I have no doubt, in which all Protestant churches are approaching each other. The 'evangelicals' are moving towards us, theologically; we are moving towards them, in a wiser distribution of our emphasis, and in a better choice of methods. In the name of the dear Christ who would have us all one, let the good work go on. Let us make the most of our agreements, and be alienated as little as may be by our differences. So will the unity the Master prayed for come; and over every partition-wall broken down and every difference removed, and as every new sign appears, telling that the now sundered members of Christ's body are becoming more "fitly joined together . . . to the edifying of itself in love," let every good man shout, Thank God! — as every angel in heaven will surely say, Amen!

Any accord of ours with 'orthodoxy' — as to methods, however, let it be understood, argues no accord in doctrine. The methods belong to Christianity, — not to 'orthodoxy;' and to approach 'orthodoxy' — not by way of imitation, but in a clearer apprehension of what the best administration of the Gospel requires, — in the use of these common Christian methods, is one thing; — to approach it in principle or ultimate conclusion, is quite another. We thus approach it in principle or conclusion, only when we limit the extent of salvation, or materialize its substance. We do not so approach it, however we may emphasize the fact that salvation has its conditions. 'Orthodoxy,' partial, arbitrary, judicial in spirit, proceeds on one plane of principle and purpose, to one end. The conception of Christianity which we represent, impartial and parental, proceeds on a very different plane, to a very different end. One counts law, the other counts souls, as God's paramount care. *That* thinks chiefly of vengeance, miscalled justice; *this* of reconciliation. *That* makes it its business to save souls from hell; *this* to deepen and magnify a sense of the intrinsic peril and curse of wrong. *That* points to Christ as our

substitute in the endurance of the penalty of God's law, and calls us to faith in him as the expedient to get us into heaven when we die; *this* presents Christ as the messenger of God's love and truth, and calls us to faith in him as the power of God to build up heaven within ourselves wherever we may be. *That* seeks to have us 'make our peace with God' by doing something to change His feelings and attitude towards us; *this* by quickening us to a change of feeling and attitude towards Him. And, finally, *that* portrays a flaming abyss which God has built for the endless torture of sinners after death, and, leading us to its brink, essays to terrify us into a religious life; *this* shows first that all separation from God, or lack of sympathy with Him, is darkness, death, and hell, and then, proclaiming that the mere decease of the body avails nothing to release us from it, seeks to persuade us by the love of God and the Saviour, by the blessings of goodness and by the curse of sin, to turn straightway to God through Christ, since, whether present or absent, in the flesh or out, he is the sole gate into a divine acceptance and the best life.

It is clear, then, that the New Departure here urged in no way involves any sacrifice of our Universalist identity. It means simply a consistent enforcement of our own principles, in no assimilation to 'orthodoxy,' except that we are to be willing to profit by every example of earnestness, of systematic and effective work, and of whole-hearted consecration, wherever it may appear. They, it is worth while to remark in passing, are the only Universalists at all open to the charge of approaching the old 'orthodoxy' in principle, who insist that salvation is something to be conferred upon us at death without any condition of faith or effort, here or elsewhere, on our part.

2. It will be alleged, perhaps, that the New Departure here urged involves a cessation of our doctrinal work. But it is not so. I have already said that we are to abate nothing from the emphasis or constancy with which we proclaim our grand result, and that argument and exposition, attack and defence, will still be required; and as to our work of Christian teaching, I have seriously failed in what I intended, if it has not been implied, as the underlying thought of all

that has been said, that this is, of course, to proceed. What is contemplated in this plea for a New Departure, as will more fully appear in the chapters that are to follow, is — only less of antagonism, denial, and controversy, for *mere* doctrinal ends, and a great deal more of affirmative, constructive, applying labor, for vital and practical results.

I am free to confess, indeed, that there seems to me to be little occasion for us to preach doctrine as a means of inducing a rejection of the sacrificial theology, or of making converts to Universalist ideas. Numerous outside agencies are rapidly doing these things for us. Years ago one of our thoughtful laymen (Ex-Governor Washburn), speaking of such agencies, truly said that they are accomplishing more for Universalism, in these respects, than Universalists themselves. But large numbers, including not a few who bear the Universalist name, have only the crudest conceptions of what Universalism is. The grounds, relations, and arguments of the truth, and the meaning of the Bible as bearing upon it, are not understood. For these reasons, Universalism should still be preached as *a doctrine*. And there is another reason. Universalism, we believe, is only another name for Christianity; and Christianity, though it culminates in a life, is, in essence, a system of principles — that is, of doctrines. Hence only as these doctrines are apprehended is Christianity apprehended, or can it become most effectually a power for the salvation of souls. To preach *about* Christianity, or *about* what it requires, is not to preach Christianity, nor for the fulfilment of Christian ends. Christianity is preached only as its doctrines are preached, and only thus are the materials and inspiration for the Christian life supplied. "Sanctify them *through thy truth*," was our Lord's prayer for his disciples; and we never find him or his apostles preaching for the conversion and sanctification of men except by preaching doctrines as the basis of the precepts they enjoined. They preached principles, and not *about* principles, showing men how and why to be good, instead of talking about goodness. And what was wise in them is no less wise in us. Nor can we, or any other church, do God's work of translating His truth

into life, except as they sought to do it — upon a doctrinal foundation.

But observe, they never preached doctrine *simply* as doctrine, nor with reference to any *mere* intellectual contest or victory. Neither should we. They preached it only to rebuke sin, and impel to holiness. We should preach it only for the same purpose. Like theirs, our business is to quicken and save souls. What the time and the world most call for is moral inspiration. It is important what one believes concerning God, and the spirit and issues of His government. But the question of transcendent concern is, not whether one believes in Universalism, but whether, believing it, or professing to believe it, he is showing himself experimentally a believer. Is he filled with a sense of obligation to God and the Saviour? Is he a man of prayer? Does he abhor sin? Is he melted and humbled at the foot of the cross? Does his soul glow with religious affection? Is his being instinct with spiritual life? These are the only results for which any church has a right to exist; and only to produce these should we preach doctrine, or anything else.

This is the fact to which the New Departure here outlined would call attention: not to induce any neglect or oversight of doctrine, but that the purpose of all Christian teaching may be more distinctly recognized, and that Universalism as a doctrine may be so conceived and administered as to do more in religiously quickening souls, and leading them to God.

3. The other objection I anticipate is, that what is here proposed is no *new* departure at all. This may come from two entirely opposite quarters.

On the one hand, those in sympathy with the general purpose here in view may say that what is urged should not be spoken of as a '*new* departure,' for the reason that so to designate it is to fail to do justice to the actual condition of our church-thought, is to overlook what has already occurred, and is thus to imply what is not true. What is proposed, they may say, has been for a considerable time in progress; and for themselves, they may add, they took the departure long ago. But if these brethren will turn back a

few pages (p. 21), they will see that I have distinctly said that many among us have already individually taken this departure, and that, in important respects, the tone and methods of our Church to-day are very different from what they were twenty years ago. Moreover, the whole plea I here make proceeds on the ground that the change of sentiment which has taken place among us demands it. What I am anxious to see, as I intimated in the connection referred to, is a concerted, systematic movement, by common consent striking out into the new style of labor that is called for, and distinctively committing us *as a church* to it. As a matter of *personal* conviction and method, what is recommended has, to some extent, already been done by not a few of us. As a *denominational* movement, it has yet to be done. Only in this latter sense do I speak of it as a *new* departure, and in this sense it clearly is so.

Then, on the other hand, it will be said by those opposed to the course here recommended, that it would be no *new* departure, only a return of our Church to the old doctrine of 'future punishment,' and thus a going back to ground we have once abandoned. But any such objection is without basis in fact. I can conceive, indeed, that it might have in it some element of fact, and yet be no objection. In the violence of its reaction from existing opinions, a movement may for a time swing away from some truth to which it finds it necessary afterward to return; and such a return, in its place, is a going forward as really as though the truth were then first announced. In this case, however, the objection has not even so much to make it valid. The theory of 'future punishment,' as it prevailed in our early history,* — and as it has usually prevailed, — proceeds on the 'orthodox' predicate that God's administration is not now one of just and equal moral awards; that this earthly life is one of probation, not of exact retribution; and that,

* Murray and his followers, it should be said, disclaimed the doctrine of future punishment as a penal infliction, as they disclaimed all punishment in any penal sense. Christ, they held, has paid our debt under the law, and hence, in justice, there can be no more punishment for sin. Sufferings do, indeed, follow transgression, after death, as here; but these, it was alleged, are consequential, not penal.

in the case of those who die unsaved, the account is to be squared only as they are still further punished on the other side of the grave. In other words, the theory is one of debt and credit, affirming in effect that the sinful and unbelieving at death stand charged with so much punishment due, and that the books can be balanced only as this is hereafter visited upon them. But all such theorizing is now happily exploded among us, as it is fast passing out of the thought of all well-informed and reflective minds.

The Ballouian period, in the order of our development, did incalculable service, not alone to us, but to the whole Christian world, in this respect. Herein, doubtless, was its providential purpose. Up to that period, the whole interest of our being was focalized in the future world. Everything here was thought to be morally at loose ends — the wicked not punished; the good not rewarded; every man left to live as he might list, with occasion only to think of that terrible day of account yonder, when the books are to be opened, and all are to be brought to judgment. So far as this world is concerned, the whole current of theological teaching averred, there is no motive to live a godly life, the preponderance of motive being rather on the side of a life of sin, were it not for the terrible hour of recompense that is coming; but then all the hardships and sacrifices of the good are to be paid for by the felicities of heaven, and all the rejoicings and prosperities of the bad are to be balanced by the torments of hell. Thus time was nothing. Eternity was everything. Hosea Ballou — speaking of him as leader and representative — made war against all this. He proclaimed God's instant and constant moral rule. He appealed to the Bible, and familiarized the popular ear with the statements, long overlooked, that God "verily is a God that judgeth in the earth;" that, "though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished;" that "*the way* of transgressors *is* hard;" that "there *is* no peace, saith the Lord, to the wicked;" and that, while "to *be* carnally-minded *is* death, to *be* spiritually-minded *is* life and peace." He did not fail to recognize the fact that time is often required for certain judgments to culminate and burst upon evil-doers, as also for certain fruits of righteousness to

ripen into most conspicuous display. But, he iterated and reiterated, God reigns nevertheless, holding every soul to rigid account. He never suspends payment, or does business on credit; but by inviolable laws, according to what one *is* in character, must, every moment, be his experience of loss and pain, or peace. And, thus preached, how this doctrine was ridiculed and denounced! What weapons of sarcasm, and argument, and misapplied Scripture were launched against it! What idiocy and 'moral insanity' it was alleged to indicate! What appeals to appearances and seeming facts were made, often "with great, swelling words," to demonstrate how opposed it was to the lessons of actual daily life! But, despite all, the testimony was persistently given, and, with untiring pertinacity, the Bible was cited, history and experience were invoked, and the nature of things, and the necessities of spiritual law, were adduced in its support and demonstration. As the result, no moral philosophy would now be thought sound that did not include this doctrine as one of its cardinal ideas; and no intelligent pulpit, at all abreast of the time, fails more or less positively to enforce it. Had Hosea Ballou done nothing else except so to put into the thought and consciousness of Christendom this vital fact concerning the instant and constant operation of God's moral government, he would deserve to be honored as one of the world's great reformers; and while most of us now are compelled to think, and on occasion do not scruple to say, that in our judgment some of the theorizings and conclusions of the Ballouian period have been exceedingly mischievous as practical elements of our denominational life, we hold it as undeniable that, on the whole, it has helped us and helped the world onward, and that these undesirable speculations, inevitably incident to such a drift-period of thinking, have been more than counterbalanced by the result thus accomplished, — a result, it is perhaps for us to consider, that could have been so widely and thoroughly reached only as attention was arrested, and discussion engendered, and feeling stirred by the extreme putting of this idea in the doctrine of 'no future punishment.' The evil of overstatement is not unfrequently thus overruled for the permanent advance of truth.

At all events, the Universalist church is now immovably fixed in this position; and what is here urged is no going back to any outgrown and abandoned doctrine, but really a new departure, because a more logical and strenuous affirmation of the principle underlying this position as always and everywhere true. And if, as this principle alleges, God does actually deal with us so rigidly according to our character, holding us instantly and constantly to account, to what but the very thing here pressed are we called as the duty most imperatively devolving on us? For, if God does so hold us to account, then, no matter where we may be, CHARACTER becomes the one grand concern on which everything in our moral experience depends. And, this being so, how can we, as a Christian church, at all discharge our obligations, unless we hold up this fact, and summon men to act in view of it, as the fact of solemn and perpetual significance it is?

Contenting myself, then, with these rejoinders to the objections likely to be made to the purpose of these pages, the question returns, Has not the time fully come for the New Departure here sketched? If the Gospel of Christ be indeed God's ministry of healing and life to a perishing world, — if sin really is a wrong, on account of which we should feel guilty, and a curse, without regard to time or place, from which we need escape, — if especially it be true, as we have come so generally to believe, that there is unspeakable peril in sin, that every human soul has something at stake on its character and choice, not simply for this world, but for all worlds, and that, till it heartily repents, and gives itself to God through Christ, it is and must be, according to its lack of religious quickening and purpose, in darkness and spiritual death, whether in this world or any other, — is it not alike the call of God and of needy souls that we give ourselves as never before to the enforcement of these truths, and thus to the endeavor to make them, to the widest possible extent, "the power of God unto salvation" in the world?

Let no one raise the cry that this is a proposition to disturb the existing harmony of our Church, or to set up new

standards of Universalist fellowship. Nothing is here said of any new terms of fellowship; and it is preposterous to suppose that the harmony of our Church is to be disturbed by any honest effort to call us more perfectly to meet the demands of any convictions to which we have generally arrived. Our Church, thank God, is at length ONE; and palsied be the hand or tongue that, except on some issue of overmastering principle, would divide it. Our platform is laid; and as it is, so in substance it must be. We need no new departure in this respect. Whoever believes in the Bible as the record of God's successive revelations, in the Lord Jesus Christ as the authoritative Son of God, and in the final redemption of all souls through Christ, is a Universalist, however he may interpret the Bible on incidental points. We have always had the largest liberty of opinion on this common platform. This liberty of opinion must continue. But it is clearly not only fit, but obligatory upon us, that the dominant state of opinion shall give distinctive tone and direction to our church-life. It would be both a very factious and a very unreasonable minority that should deny this, be the dominant opinion what it might; and, while no one's freedom of opinion or of utterance is to be trenched upon, our general conviction as to the nature of salvation, and as to what is dependent on faith and prayer and spiritual co-operation with God, must, unless we are to fail of the errand appointed us, henceforth determine our estimate as to *what* we have to do, and *how* we shall seek to do it.

This, then, is the New Departure for which it is the purpose of this book to plead. It is not, indeed, the only new departure to which we are called, as we go forward to make up the record of another century. Intellectually we need to make such a departure, and, not less, practically.

The Universalist believer should be second to no other in the breadth and freshness of his thinking, in the largeness of his mental hospitality and acquirements, or in the warmth and comprehensiveness of his moral and philanthropic concern. And the Universalist church must be nowhere excelled in its zeal for education; in the ripeness and fulness

of its culture; in its superiority to prescription and prejudice; in its readiness to welcome light, come it whence it may; or in its wise and free-handed plans for the instruction of the ignorant, and the rescue of the perishing. Our record in these respects is creditable, but we must be ambitious for far better things.

Sympathetically, Universalism is the synonyme of a love that includes all souls, and of a saving purpose which leaves not one out; and it will be a shame to us if, as our numbers and resources increase, we do not put ourselves, in respect to all philanthropic and practical Christian activities, in the van of the church, where, as the representatives of such a gospel, we belong.

And so, theoretically, Universalism is equally the synonyme of "*whatsoever* is true;" and, as its disciples, it is incumbent on us to be open, receptive, inquiring, accordingly. There are religionists who are afraid of science, and who, amidst the jostlings of modern discovery, are constantly putting forth their hands to steady the ark of God. And occasion enough *they* have for apprehension. But a true religion has nothing to fear from any true science. Science is the knowledge of God's doings demonstrated to our reason; religion is the knowledge of the same God revealed to our faith. Let science explore and demonstrate wheresoever or whatsoever it may, then, the religion that really has God's truth in it can possibly come to no harm. For this reason, we have nothing to apprehend, only, in the way of illustration and confirmation, everything to expect. We should welcome discovery, therefore, and keep abreast of the most advanced knowledge, that we may see how all truth harmonizes, and be led up every shining path which it opens, with strengthened faith, into sweeter nearness to God.

Speculations there are, indeed, calling themselves science, irreverent, self-sufficient, which, skimming the surface, or jumping at conclusions, set themselves, "with malice prepense," to undermine all religion, and relegate the world back to Paganism. And a habit of scientific assumption, too, there is, and a disposition to insist that all inquiries must be pushed in an exclusively scientific spirit, both of

which repudiate faith as a rightful element in any conclusion. All these we must be able to estimate at their real worth, and to dispose of as they deserve. But true science we must hail as always our ally and friend, to be not simply accepted, but loved, served, in every legitimate way furthered and encouraged.

And so in respect to all that is highest and broadest in the intellectual activities of the age, and of the coming ages. Not only must we have our scientists and educators. We must have our philosophers, our discoverers, our historians, our thinkers and workers in every field, kings and priests among the most regal and priestly leaders of the world, to whom none who wish to know the best things can afford to be indifferent. We shall have them.

And, so led, our whole Church must be pervaded by a kindred spirit. We know not, indeed, to what momentous office, in relation to the Bible and Christianity, this Church of ours is, in the providence of God, yet to be called. With 'orthodoxy,' science and all progressive thought are in irrepressible conflict. All the discoveries and tendencies of the time are at war with its old statements and interpretations. Ere we are aware of it, therefore, the fortunes of Christianity as a historical religion, humanly speaking, may be in our keeping; and upon us, reviled as we have been as the enemies and rejecters of the Bible, its final defence and vindication may devolve. Ours it should be to prepare for so grave a trust, ready and waiting to keep step with every new advance, that whatever results earnest thought and legitimate investigation may anywhere furnish, may be made by us to tell for the further verification of truth and the glory of God.

All this, however, will come naturally in the order of events, if we keep ourselves in other respects a live and faithful people. Our deepest and most imperative need is spiritual awakening and impulse. This is the deepest and most imperative need of all Christendom. The old theologies are dying. Souls are adrift. Minds are questioning and doubting. Hearts are hungering. Life is largely without centre or mastery, except from beneath. What they

need is spiritual arrest, quickening, anchorage. Ours it is, if we actually have any business in the world, to answer these great uses. We must arrest, attract, religiously satisfy, and vitalize what will else be without any spiritual ministry or direction. And, to do this, we must be a people profoundly conscious of spiritual realities, and glowing with spiritual life. Our principles are final and eternal. Our standards of fellowship are all we require, if honestly interpreted and faithfully enforced. In every outward particular we are well equipped for the work assigned us. Our one thing wanting is that, taking up the words of the apostle, we shall say with high resolve, "Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule; let us mind the same thing." We have thus far carried the torch of God's universal and immutable love to dissipate the shadows and burn up the errors of the old interpretations, disclosing afar off the issue to which, under His guardianship, all things surely tend. We are now called to use this torch more clearly to disclose the conditions on which all spiritual results depend, and on which alone the prophesied fact of Christ's efficiency can become a fact accomplished in any soul. We are to emphasize spiritual law. We are more specifically to aim at definite spiritual ends. More positively recognizing the work of saving souls as *the* work of every Christian church, we are to address ourselves as never before to this labor. In one word, having fought the battle and won the position we have, ourselves meanwhile growing into greater distinctness of intellectual and moral perception, we are to avail ourselves of the position we have reached to enter on our second century seeing more clearly precisely what, as the servants of the world's Redeemer, we have to do, and using more earnestly the new and higher means of influence at our command.

Why and how this is to be done, it will be the purpose of succeeding chapters to show.

CHAPTER II.

A SURVEY OF THE FIELD.

What is the net result? This is the question after every battle. It is equally the question after every struggle of whatever sort, and especially after every moral or religious contest, or as there comes a time in its progress for a pause and a survey of the field. Naturally, therefore, it is the question that comes to us at the opening of our second century.

Theologically, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, the result of our work is surprising. Scarcely less surprising is the change which, out of a handful of unlettered ministers and scattered believers, during a period comparatively so short, and against hostile influences so numerous and powerful, has made us in standing and resources what, as a church, we to-day are. But what of moral and spiritual results? What of the religious effectiveness of our methods and motives? Christ came a quickening spirit, to be the world's Saviour; and Christianity, as his instrument, aims steadily at one purpose, viz., the religious awakening and salvation of souls. Every church, therefore, that is really a Church of Christ, stands invested with this meaning; and so far as it fails in this respect, whatever else it may do, it fails in its final design. Our net result in this respect, then, what is it?

In part, it is a result every way creditable. To multitudes, Universalism has been a ministry of divine awakening and power. Oppressed, many of them despairing, amidst the gloom and discouragements of the traditional creeds, or walking in the darkness of unbelief, or living in indifference or sin, its light has shone upon them, and suddenly they have found themselves in a new world. The thought of God has grown beautiful to them. Christ has become more precious. A new meaning has glorified

the cross, and sent home the pathos of its appeals to their hearts. Duty has become more attractive; sin more repugnant; prayer a privilege and a strength of which they had never dreamed; religion an unspeakable joy. "All their lifetime subject to bondage," trembling at the thought of death, or asking with anxious and moaning hearts, Are our beloved safe? they have seen heaven opened, as it were a fresh revelation, disclosing its certain reunions and the blessedness of God's perfect service, and have been attracted towards God and the redeemed in a holier life. Others, born in the atmosphere of Universalism and nurtured in its spirit, have illustrated its influence as an element of Christian culture, as they have knelt from their youth at the feet of the Saviour, saying, like Samuel, "Speak, Lord; thy servant heareth thee," and giving themselves to the work of the Church. A rich record Universalism has made for itself in these respects; and could we but see the long procession of those — young, middle-aged, and old — stretching through the past hundred years, who have thus been reached and benefited by it, we should need no other evidence that God is in it.

But while this is one side — and a very gratifying side — of the case, and while we thus have many reasons to be proud of Universalism and of the Universalist Church, and to thank God for what they have done, we cannot close our eyes to the fact that, *religiously*, the result of our first century's work is not all we could wish. We are improving in this particular, and are every year becoming a more religious people, with more of insight and spiritual life. But our failure at this point is none the less *the* one great occasion of sorrow to many of our ministers and the more thoughtful of our people, as they look over the field and sum up the outcome of our labors; nor is it to be concealed that many are anxiously asking, What *is* the explanation? As concerns all the moralities, respectabilities, and charities of life, Universalists may challenge comparison anywhere. The benevolence of their faith broadens their sympathies, and — despite some mischievous speculations which will be duly noticed in a future chapter — its philosophy of moral obligation and award cultivates an ethical conscience, so

that, as a class, they are conspicuous in these regards. But when we look for what is deeper and more experimental, to an extent at all corresponding, we do not find it.

Looking outside what we have been accustomed to call our denomination, but what we are hereafter to designate as our CHURCH, we discover that multitudes who say they believe Universalism are identifying themselves with other churches, helping to support what they profess to regard as false; and still worse, if possible, other like multitudes are content to have no religious associations, and with their children, are helping to swell the number of those who enjoy the blessings of our Christian institutions, but do nothing for their support.

And looking within the lines of our organization, while we can truthfully say that no church shows a higher average of people upright in business, kind to the poor, every way reputable, it cannot be said that devout affections and a religious conscience are by any means general among us. We are not a praying people — that is, in the sense in which this phrase is commonly employed. Praying Universalists, in this sense, there are, many of them; how many there are who pray in the voiceless secrecy of their communion with God, it is for no human pen to assume to say. But the custom of family, social, or stated private prayer does not, to any considerable extent, prevail among us, because there is no prevailing sense of duty in these directions; and how rare it is to find those in our congregations who can be called to lead in public prayer, we all know. We have opinion rather than faith; more nominal assent than spiritual impulse or purpose. Our parishes far outnumber our churches; and where churches exist, they, as the rule, are very small, with a male membership lamentably disproportionate to that of the congregations. And then look abroad: what mean the so-called Universalist societies — alas, so many of them! — dead or dormant? What mean the Universalist meeting-houses sold, or rented, or standing unused, given up to decay, monuments to our dishonor? And last, but not least, what mean the fields where for years Universalism — or what has borne that name — has been preached to no visible effect in the spiritual vitality of the people,

and only to result in a sickly and struggling life for the congregations, or in final wreck and dispersion? For two successive years, not long since, I spent several vacation Sundays with one of our oldest parishes in New England, trying to make the dead bones live. The community is a thriving one, and the Universalists, so-called, have all the advantage of numbers, wealth, and position. But having sold their house of worship, the most of them first allowed themselves to be bodily transferred to an attempt to build up a Unitarian society; and this experiment having failed, they have since sunk into comparative apathy, and though having occasional preaching, seemed, the last I heard of them, to be dying of spiritual inanition. Nor, unfortunately, is this a solitary case — so far as the substantive facts of apathy and inanition are concerned. The question presses, then, What mean these things? And still further, how are we to account for the religious deadness and the indisposition to do anything for the organization of parishes, or the support of public worship, in so many sections where a nominal Universalism widely prevails? There are counties in my native state (New Hampshire), where what is called Universalism may almost be said to be the prevalent form of religious thought, and where there is no lack of pecuniary ability, which are complete wastes as regards any active Christian effort, save as an occasional Sunday's preaching may intermit the dearth. Other states show similar districts.

These are some of the facts we are compelled to contemplate. They must, there being so many of them, have some common meaning. What is it? I hesitate to say it; but I do not see how we can avoid the conclusion, that what large numbers of people hold as Universalism is thus practically proved to lack penetrative, awakening, mastering power. Those who profess it are in no way *possessed* by it. They are not melted or smitten, are not "pricked in heart," or brought to their knees by it. It is of the head, — not of the deepest or inmost life. It begets no intensity of conviction. It fills with no sense of religious obligation. It prostrates with no consciousness of sin. It stirs to no penitence. It inspires no consecration. In a word, it fails to save souls.

These are hard things for me to say. But, unfortunately, they are indisputable facts — the reverse side of the net result of our first hundred years' labor. I shall, no doubt, be thought by some of my brethren injudicious, — perhaps shall be charged by others with overdrawing, because I state them so unreservedly. But we have long enough talked about them in private, and hinted at them in our public utterances. The time has come for them to be plainly set forth, and for the probe to be fearlessly applied, to reveal their cause or causes. I am not unaware, of course, that statements so free are likely to be used to our disadvantage by unscrupulous sectarists, who will give no attention, for themselves or others, to the explanations which are to follow; and I shall, no doubt, be represented as having said that Universalism is religiously a failure, with no power to save souls. But whoever so represents me, directly or by implication, will deliberately violate the ninth commandment, and allege what I neither say nor mean. As an honest man, I could no longer preach nor advocate Universalism, if I could either make or believe any such statement. While, however, fully recognizing this liability to a misrepresentation of the statement which I really make, it has not seemed to me any reason why it should be withheld or qualified. It is a cowardly friendship for any truth that fears to deal honestly with its hinderances, or to point out the errors and mistakes of its nominal adherents, lest some enemy should be dishonest enough to pervert or misrepresent what may be said. The only way to treat a disease is, first of all, to face it at its worst, and then to look after its remedy.

Some of the causes of the state of things I have glanced at are common to our human nature, without regard to sect or creed. They are such, therefore, as are afflicting all churches, more or less, with the evils complained of. Every denomination has its wayside hearers, its stony ground, its thorny ground, as well as its good ground. Regarding other churches at a distance and from the outside, everything may appear roseate as to their earnestness and spirituality; but going inside, we find matters quite different, and learn that they have their lacks and their failures as

well as we: a statement, as I once made it in substance from the pulpit, emphatically indorsed by an Episcopal clergyman who heard it, and that was attested with equal emphasis, some years ago, by a New England minister who left the Unitarians to join the Orthodox, and more recently by a good, but unstable brother, now deceased, who went from us to the Swedenborgians, expecting to find them far more spiritual than we, but in a year or two returned, wofully disappointed.

The whole history of religious truth abounds in just such two-sided results as we have to confess. It was so with the ministry even of the apostles. Not only were there those who were hearers and not doers of the word, but there were those who heard and believed only to misapprehend, and who, failing to perceive the guiding and cleansing purpose of what they nominally received, were made rather worse than better. The Epistles abound with references and exhortations which show that there were such in all the early churches: those to whom their new Christian freedom meant only license, and who, released from their old motives, and failing to be reached by the new, were morally lawless, with no positive sense of obligation anywhere. As the result, in part, what now are the very fields in which Christianity was first preached? Moral wastes, giving no sign in the life of the people of the divine ministry of Christ, or of the heroic labors of apostles, by which the ground has since been hallowed to every Christian heart. Does it, therefore, follow that Christianity is not of God? And following it down, has Christianity even yet altogether ceased to be misapprehended, or to be held in unrighteousness? Or, would it be too much to say of forms of Christianity which the most 'evangelical' will admit come within that definition, that what large numbers thus hold to be Christianity is practically proved unequal to the work of saving souls? The Reformation furnished evidence to the same effect. Numerous extravagances of doctrine and action followed the emancipation of religious thought from its long thraldom. Luther himself seems not always to have discriminated very closely between non-allegiance to the authority of the Church, and non-allegiance to the authority of God's Word; and as he contem-

plated the crudities and fanaticisms of opinion, and the moral looseness and lawlessness growing out of the causes which he had been the means of setting in operation, he is said to have wrung his hands at times in his distress and mortification, almost repenting what he had done. The early annals of Methodism give similar witness. Charles Wesley confesses himself "much discouraged by the disorderly walking of some who have given the adversary occasion to blaspheme," and records that many insisted "that a part of their Christian calling is a liberty from obeying, not liberty to obey;" and John Wesley had much trouble with "disorderly walkers," of some of whom he said that "the spirit of Ham, if not of Korah, fully possessed them;" while of others, his biographer records that they "fell into extravagant notions, and ways of expression, more proper to be heard in Bedlam than in a religious society." *

These are but examples of a general rule. Every movement towards a fresh statement of truth, while attracting some who will catch its spirit and be helped by it to a better life, is sure to attract others who will do neither. Some, more or less correctly perceiving it intellectually, will hold it only as a lifeless theory, a lump of so much lead in the brain, and still others, totally misapprehending it, will accept it only as an occasion of license, or of indifference and neglect. Nor is any doctrine, claiming to be truth, responsible for such consequences, except as they are the clear and legitimate fruit of some principle essential in it. Paul thanked God for the success of his labors, though what he preached was to some "a savor of death unto death." Preaching what he believed to be the truth, he felt that he and his labors were approved of God, though some did hear only to disbelieve, or to believe in a misunderstanding of the new faith, and thus to be injured rather than benefited. And this is the law always. "What though some were faithless to their trust?" asked Paul, concerning the Jews. "Shall their faithlessness destroy the faithfulness of God?" (Rom. iii. 3, Conybeare & Howson's Version.) All truth is liable to perversion, misconstruction, abuse. But the truth

* Whitehead's Life of Wesley, pp. 128, 135, 436, 453.

is none the less the truth on account of either of these things, and is to be preached, notwithstanding — because it is the truth, and because it is sure, in time, to purge itself of all such concomitants.

There are, moreover, some special considerations to be taken into account in our case, aside from the point of chief interest in it.

In the first place, it must not be forgotten how much this Universalist movement involves. It is commonly thought of as a mere change of opinion concerning a single doctrine. But it is far more than this. It is a breaking up of all the established habits of religious thinking. Still holding on to God and Christ and the Bible, it is a new theory of them all; a reconstruction of the whole system of Christian theology, substituting new principles of action, appealing to a new set of motives, making life, as to its foundation and spirit, a totally different thing. And this being so, consider how much ground is thus covered, and how many are the conditions, alike as to what must be done and what must be undone, which have to be fulfilled before Universalism can become thoroughly appreciated, and so be fairly put into life. No ship, leaving its anchorage, at once gets the wind and goes straight on its course. It always drifts more or less before the canvas sets, and the rudder makes itself felt. So, by similar necessities, in every moral and intellectual movement. It takes time for new principles fully to assert themselves; for loosened minds to get wonted to freer and broader channels; for heart and conscience to feel the pressure of higher appeals, and thus for the new motives to obtain mastery.

Then, too, it must be borne in mind how, from the first up to a very recent period, we have been arguing and fighting, — important employments, without which we could not have leavened and modified religious opinion as we have, but not employments favorable to spiritual culture, or to a high order of religious life. For a long time, on this account, what passed under the name of Universalism, — what many preachers exclusively preached, and what solely filled far too many pews, was simply anti-orthodoxy. It had little or no sympathy with any affirmative faith, and as little

interest in any positive practical Christian aims. It cared only to deny and argue and pull down, and began to lose whatever life or zeal it had, as soon as labor was turned towards personal spiritual experience, or definite religious ends. It and its dying out among us furnish the sufficient explanation for many of the so-called Universalist meeting-houses transferred, or surrendered to decay, and for many of the nominal Universalist societies dead or dormant.

Another thing in this same direction: Because of this antagonistic and controversial attitude to which we were for years in part compelled, and which, unfortunately for us, this anti-orthodoxy still further intensified, it is to be considered what kind of material, for a time, with much that was better, drifted into formal connection with us — some of it coarse, some of it corrupt, all of it eager only for a game of fisticuffs with 'our opposers,' without religious sensibility or purpose, and, wherever it touched, poisonous and destructive to every best interest of our cause. It is the penalty of all new movements to take along more or less such material, — as every freshet gathers into its current all kinds of lumber and rubbish as it sweeps along. But the rubbish is not the stream. As little does this sort of material make part really of any worthy movement which may, for a season, be cursed with it. But it is a curse, none the less; and this curse, we, like others, have not failed to experience.

Nor is this all. It must be remembered how widely Universalism has been compelled to do its work, hindered and neutralized by the influence and false education of 'orthodoxy.' "I know," said a little four-years-old son of one of our ministers, as his Sunday school teacher was talking with his class about bad boys, "I know what becomes of bad boys. They go to hell, and are burned up forever." And this talk from a child of one of our ministers — and a minister most watchful over his children and their associations, well illustrates how the whole atmosphere of society has been pervaded by the doctrines and spirit of the traditional creeds. Universalism has not been permitted to assert itself as an element of Christian nurture uncontaminated by these creeds, even in our own homes. What has been

the consequence? With numerous other mischievous impressions, the public mind has been saturated with the idea that were it not for hell, and our exposure to endless woe, there would be no good reason why we should be religious, or at all concerned in religious work. Of course, the fear of hell being removed, people so trained have had little or no conception of any other motive sufficient to control them. What wonder, then, that Universalism has not been so successful as, under other circumstances, it might have been in lifting the popular mind up to the level of its appeals, and so in putting its own spirit and motives into those theoretically converted to its doctrines? And what have we, really, in much of the neglect and irreligion ordinarily charged to the account of Universalism, but the direct harvest of 'orthodox' training, or of the principles which it has sown and tilled? Nor is it a fact to pass without mention here, that the Universalism of large numbers who have dishonored our name has been wholly learned from the slanders of 'evangelical' pulpits. Such pulpits, falsely representing the teachings of Universalism to be what they never were, have sent away the profane and the vicious with the impression that Universalism is favorable to their low and vicious life, and they have said, If this is Universalism, then we are Universalists; and we have had to bear the odium of their professed friendship, though they knew no more of Universalism than Simon the sorcerer knew of the Gospel, and were without even so much of right to bear its name as he had to call himself a Christain.

Still further: Until within a few years, comparatively, we have been without any system of religious culture and work. In the reaction of our denominational fathers from the *doctrines* they renounced, there was, naturally, — almost unavoidably, — a quite general reaction from all existing religious *methods*. Prayer-meetings, the church, the Sunday school, tracts, missionary societies, family prayer, a formal profession of religion, everything but the simple service of preaching, was, to a wide extent, opposed, or, if not opposed, ridiculed or neglected, as savoring of cant, fanaticism, or priestcraft. The pendulum had begun to return from this mischievous reaction just before I entered the ministry;

but its consequences long continued, and even now have not wholly ceased. If there are to be religious results, there must necessarily be some system of means to secure them. So long lacking any such system, then, and not simply lacking, but to a large extent deriding and fighting against it, how could it be but that the consequences should be religiously disastrous to us?

Particularly must it be taken into account, in this connection, to how small an extent we have had any thorough and systematic training of our children, even in the doctrines of the Bible as we understand them, — much less with reference to religious obligation and experience, and a distinctively religious life. Some of them, from their very infancy, have been carefully and prayerfully educated in Universalism, not only theoretically, but as a religious power: and how many such have anywhere failed to be devout, earnest, consecrated men and women? But as the rule, has it not been thought sufficient that children growing up in our homes should be trained in a general way to respect God and the Bible and the Sabbath, and to be kind, honest, truthful, morally upright, and when this has been done, have they not been left to themselves as to anything else? And though we have had Sabbath schools, and have come of late years, almost universally, to institute them, as a matter of course, wherever we have had established congregations, has it not been equally the rule, up to a very recent period, even if it is not the fact quite so widely now, that they have taught Jewish history, Scripture biography and geography, with some occasional smattering of doctrine, and some talk about being good, leaving the more vital and spiritual applications of our truth to the conscience and the heart with comparatively little attention? Is it, then, very strange that such sowing has not resulted in the best religious harvests?

All these things have unquestionably had their importance in our case, and they severally serve to explain, in part, the failure in purely religious results which we are now noting. But the consideration which, as I believe, alone goes to the root of the matter, and explains, as none of these does, what is saddest and most perplexing in this state of

things, is yet to be mentioned. It is, that there has been among us a wide-spread lack of sufficiently serious views of irreligion and sin *as related to God and the inmost life of souls* — of which a chapter further on will duly treat. As the consequence, all the effects of sin have, to a similar extent, been supposed to end with the body, and *Universalism has thus been apprehended as simply a proclamation that all souls, at death, however they may have lived, pass at once to certain felicity, without regard to any conditions of faith, character, or effort here.*

Under any circumstances, it was inevitable, as was just now intimated, considering in what ideas the people had so long been educated, that the announcement that there is no endless hell should seem to some minds to remove all imperative reason for religious living, however conditioned or qualified salvation might have been. In a sense, motives are the nerves of life ; and it is obvious that, under no circumstances, could it be a light thing, or a task wholly unattended with danger, to take out from our physical frames one set of nerves and substitute another. A child brutalized under a *régime* of kicks and blows does not at once and readily appreciate the force of purely moral influence. At the best, therefore, it was inevitable that large numbers, because of their false and pernicious 'orthodox' education, on becoming convinced by Universalist argument to the negative extent of believing that there is no endless woe to be afraid of, should feel that the strain of religious motive was loosened, and that they were somewhat more at liberty, if they so pleased, to take things easily, and to give only so much attention to religion as they might find convenient, or as might seem to them needful to be respectable. There could not be such a transition without something of immediate moral harm. But when it came to be so almost universally understood that Universalism means not simply that there is no *endless* punishment, but that there is absolutely nothing for even the most sinful to be anxious about on the other side of death, — that live as negligently, or as wickedly, as one may here, it makes no difference as to his immediate felicity when he dies, it is not surprising — at least, to me — that the effect should be, religiously, very

unfavorable, and that we should see what we have seen, and still do see, of listlessness and unconcern.

Those there have been, indeed, holding this doctrine, who have been among the saintliest and most consecrated souls that ever blessed the world with their presence — just as there have been such among the believers of the terrible doctrines of 'orthodoxy.' But these last are no examples of what such doctrines are fitted to make their believers, — only examples of what those believing these doctrines, but feeding upon the truth associated with them, may become in spite of them — as even in the most poisonous flower the bee finds that which it transmutes into honey. And for much the same reason, never thinking of reward or punishment, — only living in habitual communion with the best and sweetest things in the Gospel, these saintly and consecrated souls among the disciples of this theory which confines all the peril of sin to this world, and which puts even the most profane and unbelieving directly into heaven at the moment of death, in no way illustrate the natural tendency of such a belief, — only illustrate what power there is in strong religious instincts, and a positive sympathy with God and the Saviour, to neutralize even very mischievous error, and to come to beautiful spiritual flower and fruit in spite of it.

If we are to test the real influence practically of such a theory, we must look to those on quite another moral level. And taking the world as it is, we cannot convince men that there is actually no peril in sin beyond this life, and that there are no conditions of salvation there to be here fulfilled, — that no matter how badly they live, or what they neglect, they will certainly slough off all unpleasant consequences of their misconduct with the body the instant they die, and go straight to glory, faring just as well as though they had lived the most self-denying and Christian life, without paralyzing their spiritual concern, and leaving them to be swayed as appetite, or the supposed interests or pleasures of this world, may suggest. Even those who think somewhat of their highest obligations are prone to put off any decided step religiously till circumstances shall be somehow more favorable, or till sometime when, as they

think, it will be easier for them to make the effort or the sacrifices required. Satisfy even them, therefore, that they have only to wait till they die, to find themselves 'all right' without any effort on their part, and, in many cases of every hundred, they will say, Why trouble ourselves about what is then so certainly to take care of itself? And, if even such will be so affected, how much more those who seldom give a moment's thought to their religious duties, save as they occasionally think what they are hereafter likely to suffer on account of their neglect!

It is true that every day is a day of reckoning, under the moral government of God, and that whoever chooses a life of worldliness or sin is making a great mistake, every day attested in his or her experience as a soul. It is no less true that every day of a saintly life is its own sufficient compensation, and that one who has attained the elevation of such a life never stops to think what he or she is to get for it hereafter. "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways; and a good man shall be satisfied from himself." And, these things being so, it is very easy to say what *should* be, and how people *ought* to live with no thought of consequences after death, certain that every day's living pays for itself. But, *as the fact*, people do not so live without regard to consequences. *As the fact*, the less one has of spiritual impulse and culture, the more he depends upon consequences to determine his choice towards good. *As the fact*, if men are to be up and doing, they must feel that they have something at stake. So it ever has been, as all experience testifies; and so, by every law or theory of motive upon which men are most accustomed to act, it ever must be. Even with reference to this world, as people average, they will not work unless some necessity is laid upon them; and, however superior to such stimulus some of rare constitution, or of a high order of spiritual development, may be, the mass of mankind, tempted and dragged down as they are by the immediate solicitations of material and sensual appeals, will not, in affairs of the soul, rise so far above the ordinary plane of motive as to deny themselves, and renounce their easy indulgence or unconcern, and put themselves to struggle and effort towards a

better life, except as the spur of consequences presses into them, and they are compelled to feel that, hereafter and always, as here, what they shall be must depend, under God, wholly upon themselves, and depend there, for a period no one can say how long, upon what they are and do here.

Had there been any room for doubt on this point before, the result of our experience would render any further doubt impossible. The several considerations recited by way of explaining the absence of the religious results we fain would see, but do not, at the close of our first hundred years, are, as has been said, important in their place; and each of them does something — some of them do a great deal — to solve the problem presented us. But when we have made the most possible out of the explanations thus furnished, there still remains much in our condition that is not touched; and *this*, as a large majority of our most thoughtful ministers and people have unquestionably come to believe, is to be directly charged to the account of the idea of *certain immediate salvation at death without regard to conduct or character*. Not that it is meant to say that the absence of any such idea would have saved us from all which we now have to deprecate. Not by any means that it is designed even to intimate that the idea of the continuity of character, and of responsibility for it, beyond death, necessarily insures religious life. We have all known persons and congregations theoretically committed to this doctrine, who were very far from being patterns of religious devotion, or even of moral uprightness. As no opinion, however false, will make all who avow it bad, so neither will any opinion, however true, spiritually vitalize all who hold it. The question in respect to all moral or religious ideas is, first, as to their truth, and then as to their general tendency, their natural and legitimate results. And what it is intended here to say is only this — that the natural tendency of the idea referred to has been to spiritual lethargy and unconcern, and that, had more philosophical and scriptural convictions concerning sin and its consequences prevailed instead of it, results more favorable would doubtless now be seen. This idea, it is meant to say, has taken away the stimulus of necessity as a

motive to religious interest or effort. It has fostered the impression that such interest or effort is entirely a matter at our private option, since it has taught those accepting it that, if they preferred to serve the world, or sin, willing to take the consequences here, they would be just as well off at death. It has thus begotten a false sense of security. It has been an opiate, lulling to slumber a religious conscience. It has enervated religious force; weakened the sense of religious responsibility; relaxed the strenuousness of religious inducement; undermined religious life; and — mourning, as we have such occasion to mourn, over Universalist societies once thriving (as it was thought), now apathetic or dead, — over Universalist meeting-houses sold, rented, or going to decay, — over nominal Universalist believers, religiously sluggish and unconcerned, — over all that tells religiously to the dishonor of our Church, and seems to attest the failure of Universalism itself as a religious power, — we are unmistakably pointed to this idea as the most fatal and effective among the causes which have wrought to produce this state of things. *All our waste and desolate fields, so far as I know, are fields where this idea has reigned.* In a word, the doctrine of a fixed and unconditional salvation, certain for all at death, has had a fair trial in our history, and the verdict is, TEKEL. It has been weighed in the balances, and found wanting.

I hold in high respect — some of them, in warm and affectionate regard — the brethren who are still supposed to entertain this doctrine. In speaking of it, I would not even in seeming violate any demand of love or courtesy towards them. But I have no words to express my profound and growing conviction as to what this theory has been as a mischievous element in the life of our Church. Nor can I sufficiently put into language the intensity of my conviction that, while the largest liberty of thought and speech is to be maintained, we owe it to ourselves, and all that is at stake in the salvation of souls, *to have it henceforth everywhere understood that Universalism means, and that the Universalist Church stands for, no such thing.*

Nor am I alone in this conviction. With different degrees of intensity, it has come to be the prevailing conviction

among us. Should it be so much as a question, then, what we will do? Surveying the field, and summing up the net result religiously of our first century, are we not imperatively called to a new departure, as we are entering upon another stage in our history? — a departure that will duly emphasize our now general conviction that salvation is *offered*, not *secured*, except as each soul complies with the conditions on which God has planned it for His children, and thus a departure that will henceforth make Universalism a call to activity, under the lead of Christ, in co-operation with God, and not a proclamation of results to be somehow wrought out by Christ, because unconditionally decreed by God, with which we have nothing to do.

I am sure I cannot err in saying that there is no thoughtful Universalist who would not be unspeakably saddened if, forecasting the horoscope of the next hundred years, he should see only a similar net result as we now have to contemplate. Thank God, he would exclaim, for any good our Church may have done, but, alas! we do not touch the vital spot; the great work to which every church of Christ is appointed in his behalf is left undone. Shall we hesitate, then, to change the administration of the truth given us, so as to touch this vital spot, and do Christ's great work? Our truth remains unchallenged. Everything proclaims it true; and there is no occasion to doubt or to distrust it. We have only erred in administering it. The sublime anthem of a complete salvation, written of God, is still to be chanted amidst the discords of sin and sorrow in our world, and we are to lead the chorus. It is only required that we pitch it to another key-note. Never before, though our net result is not all we ought to witness, have we had so much reason as now to thank God and take courage. All thought, all philosophy, all theology, all the best life of the time, is tending in our direction. Considering ourselves, moreover, not only are we greatly increased in numbers: we are more compact, better organized, more definite in aim, better equipped in means, wiser and more resolute in methods than ever before; and, better than all the rest, we are ripening morally, and deepening and becoming more alive spiritually. It is only needed that, committing ourselves

to this New Departure, we go forward, mighty in the power of our great truth as thus better administered, and working so as to secure God's blessing, in order that we may effectually retrieve any mistakes or omissions of the past, and be the conquering and redeeming Church God is inviting us to become.

CHAPTER III.

THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

The first condition of a religious life is a right sense of God, and an awakening of the heart towards Him; and in its very essence, Universalism presents God in such aspects and relations as cannot fail to touch any heart, if fittingly enforced and duly reflected upon. In respect to God, therefore, we need to take no new departure except — 1. Perhaps, to make our exposition of Him less exclusively intellectual, for purposes of mere argument, and more directly and personally an appeal to conscience and the affections, as a means of spiritual influence; and, especially, 2. To discriminate more closely in our ideas of His goodness, so as more distinctly to include the fact of His severity as well as His kindness. What is implied in the first of these specifications is being so anticipated in the current drift of our church-life, and will, besides, in so many ways run through these pages, that it is not necessary here to dwell upon it; but the second is on every account so important as to be entitled to a prominent place in this general discussion.

Reading the report of a lecture on Abyssinia,* some time ago, I was much struck with the following sentences, and particularly with the statements here italicized: "The Abyssinians, though zealous observers of fast-days, which make up nearly one third of the year, are nevertheless a very intemperate people, and many diseases are to be attributed solely to their excesses. *The practical doctrines which they derive from Christianity seem to be that there is no limit to the mercy of the Almighty, and that, as life is short and pleasure fleeting, it is desirable to seize every opportunity for enjoyment. Acting on this plausible theory,* they eat more raw meat, drink more mead, or small beer, *commit more breaches of the moral*

* By E. Hepple Hall, before the Traveller's Club, New York City.

law, and particularly of the seventh commandment, than any other Christians, in Christendom or out of it." The lecturer was represented to be an Abyssinian traveller; and assuming that the statements are reliable, they signally illustrate how the doctrine of God's illimitable mercy may be so unqualifiedly, and therefore falsely, held as to become an occasion of license rather than a motive to holiness. Our great doctrine of God's goodness has probably never been subject to any such extreme perversion; but is it too much to say that there have been approaches to some such misapprehension of it?

One of the seed-errors of 'orthodoxy' is, that it so tears the justice of God from its relations, and so exaggerates its proportions and demands, as to make it an infinite malignity; and in the earnestness of our protest against this, we have almost unconsciously been carried towards the other extreme. As the result, we have, — not exaggerated God's love, for infinite Love cannot be exaggerated, but have, to some extent, failed to keep duly in mind its qualifying attributes and the various methods it employs. A somewhat too rose-colored and sentimental view of God's character has been the consequence — as if His goodness were only an easy and infinite good-nature, a boundless and all-approving complacency, overlooking all distinctions of character, — an invincible and invariable indulgence, too tender to be rigorous, too loving to be stern and terrible. To this, rather than to any mere emphasis we have given to God's love, is due, it is believed, the wide-spread impressions — 1. That, as distinguished authority has recently expressed it, Universalism is simply "an outgrowth of the diseased sentimentalism of the period," — "the exaggeration, or, perhaps, the perversion of philanthropy," sure, "if severely left alone," to "run to seed after a little," as this "diseased sentimentalism" shall be cured by the access of a little more common sense; and 2. That Universalism is of course impeached, and Universalists necessarily unhorsed, if God's punitive justice is proved, or if anything but this easy and infinite good-nature is attributed to Him.

All such impressions, whether existing as one-sided conceptions of the truth, among ourselves, or as grounds of ob-

jection against us, among others, we must, if we are to administer the Gospel more effectively for religious ends, studiously correct, careful in the mean time to give no further justification for them. Dr. Ballou, of blessed memory, left a brief paper on this topic, not very familiar, I imagine, even to Universalist readers, but one of the best products of his wise and thoughtful mind. Let me invoke the authority of his name, and the vigor and discrimination of his pen, to set forth, so much better than I can, the view of the subject which should hereafter give character to our thinking and labor. He first deals briefly with the philosophy of criminal reform; and though it does not directly treat of the love of God, what he thus writes serves so important a purpose as an introduction to what follows, that it should not be omitted. He says, —

"It appears to us that any general system of measures for the reform of the vicious, or for the correction of the criminal, must prove futile in the end, unless it provide for the use of sharp, and sometimes terrible, severity. If we attempt to get wholly rid of this unwelcome agent in the work of human discipline, and rely exclusively on forbearance, inoffensive gentleness, and the attraction of sympathy, to effect the purpose, we shall find that they soon lose their power; when taken thus alone, they will at length exert even an injurious, because enervating, influence on the public. Human nature is such that, in order to acquire consistency and strength, it needs a great amount of hardship mingled in with its more pleasant experiences; just as we need the immense pressure of the atmosphere to stimulate the functions of animal life, or as the universal order of physical nature depends on the nice adjustment of repulsion and attraction. How would it do to dispense with either of these? In the existing state of human society, together with the arrangements of Divine Providence, there are indeed many instances of a wonderful reform of individuals effected by the exhibition of gentle persuasion alone; but, even in these instances, it is because there is already furnished a dark background of suffering, or of conscious danger, to contribute its part towards the result, and to give the gentler element a chance to penetrate the heart. Shut up the criminal in a gloomy prison, under the ban of the world, or let him anxiously fear this doom; let the general order of things be such that the vicious man shall feel that he is under the stern censure of the community in which he lives, that he has by his own fault lost the respect and fellowship for which his social nature yearns, that he has wickedly ruined his health or his business; or let him be harassed by apprehensions of these results; let the sinner be oppressed with guilt and with the consciousness of self-desolation; and then the voice of individual sympathy and encouragement may indeed come home to him with a di-

vine power, because his previous discipline, together with his present environment, has driven him to appreciate it. But how, if he had never been subjected to such unwelcome discipline? Suppose that a mistaken philanthrophy were to bring about such a state of things, that criminality should at once secure to the offender, not the ban of the world, nor the repelling censure of society, but universal sympathy, a tender, patronizing assiduity, and that all sin were to be treated simply as a misfortune, till the very sense of guilt should thus be allayed as far as possible in the sinner's own petted conscience; suppose that the element of stern penal justice should be exorcised from society, and the work of human discipline be carried on, from first to last, by soothing processes only; it is easy to see that, in this case, the gentleness would lose all its efficacy. There would need a background of severity as its complement.

"It may be well to consider the relations of the subject to the doctrine, that the spirit, in which God made and governs the world, is infinite goodness, and that the manifestation of this goodness is the means recognized by the Gospel for reconciling mankind to their Maker. Should it be asked, whether the principles we have illustrated be not inconsistent with this doctrine, we should answer, Yes, if the goodness of God were simply complacency, or were it never exhibited under any other form than that of tenderness. Here is a point on which, we think, there is want of discrimination, with many, in assuming their premises. They seem to forget the other forms in which this divine perfection is manifested. Now, we have only to look out into Nature, or into the actual course of Providence, to see the different aspects in which it appears. God created the world in infinite goodness; He always deals with us in infinite goodness; and if we but observe how He has constructed His creation, and how He administers His government, we shall see how, as matter of fact, His goodness operates.

"How, then, does it appear in Nature? Not exclusively in the form of gentleness. There is the terrible earthquake that strikes all hearts with mortal fear, and that sinks whole cities into a yawning gulf, crushing thousands under falling ruins and in the opening jaws of the earth. There is the raging hurricane that sweeps its path of desolation; the howling storm that buries the trembling, praying, and exhausted seamen in the bosom of the deep; there is the thunderbolt that smites down the unwarned victim. The solid globe itself is made of million tons of impracticable granite and rock to one of fertile soil; and it is the law proclaimed by Nature, as well as by Revelation, that man shall toil and suffer till he returns to the dust. God brings sickness upon us, and we linger through months and years of excruciating pain. He sends disappointment into our long-cherished schemes, and a blight into our fondest affections. Though we pray Him to avert the blow, and struggle in desperation to turn aside His descending rod, it is often in vain; He strikes home into our little circle of joys, and leaves us heartbroken. If we sin, He follows us with the punishment as stanch as death; if we involve ourselves in ruin, He lets us take the consequences of our folly or wickedness, without sparing. Now, all

this is but the manifestation of His goodness, for He always acts from the same unchanged principle, how different soever the outward dispensations. 'God is love;' but to us His love is as awful, in some of its workings, as it is pleasant in others. These, let it be remarked, are known facts, which it will not do to ignore.

"We must add that the Scriptures also represent His goodness in the same two-fold light. We sometimes hear language which seems to imply that the thought of God ought not to be associated with anything like severity or terrible infliction; that nothing, indeed, but ideas of the most fond and tender nature ought to enter into our conceptions of Him. This, however, is not the teaching of facts, as has been seen; and certainly it is not the presentation which we find in the Bible. According to the writers of the New Testament, God, who 'is love,' is at the same time, 'a consuming fire,' and 'it is a fearful thing to fall into His hands,' that is, for punishment. While they 'beseech us by the mercies of God,' they also admonish us in language intended to alarm, like the following: 'Despiseth thou the riches of His goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance; but, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?' Goodness, manifesting itself in the most fearful judgments, as well as in gentle aspects, — this is the view which the writers of the New Testament, when read continuously, present us of the subject; and we cannot but see that, in this, they perfectly agree with the facts of Nature and Providence. It is unquestionably the right view.

"There is a fanciful assumption that has been sometimes taken, with respect to the Bible, and dilated in various forms, namely, that the Old Testament speaks only in tones of sternness and dread, and describes God only as an object of terror, implacable, taking vengeance on His foes; while, on the other hand, the New Testament discards everything of the kind, and is all gentleness, seeking only to win. We suppose that this account of the matter can have been intended only for a fancy sketch; though it is questionable whether good taste will allow, even in a fancy sketch, so obvious a departure from the known facts in the case. Notwithstanding that the Gospel gives the fuller revelation of the character and purposes of God, yet the same principles are recognized by both parts of the Bible, we mean so far as they go. The New Testament abounds in ideas as terrible as any that we meet with in the Old, though the greater refinement of the later age may have softened, in some degree, the dress in which they are clothed. And, on the other hand, the Old Testament often speaks the language of that noted text in the Psalms, 'The Lord is good unto all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.' What can be more dreadful than those words of our Saviour, referring to the destruction of the Jewish nation, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels'? or that passage of St. Paul, with respect to the same event, 'The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, taking vengeance on them

that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power'? What can be more tender and encouraging than the words of the prophet, 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee!' Either Testament would be altogether one-sided, and therefore practically false, did it aim only to soothe and console, or only to terrify and repress.

"Perhaps it will now be said, according, then, to these views, God is good but in part, and He is, in part, otherwise. No; this is not the proper conclusion, nor is it the doctrine of the Scriptures. 'God is love;' He is wholly good in every act and in every purpose. But the important truth on which we would fix attention, and which embraces all we have said on the subject, is this: that His goodness works by severity as well as by indulgence. All true goodness operates in this way. It is not goodness, it is a mischievous dotage, which is so weakly tender that it cannot employ harsh and even terrible methods when occasion demands. In such cases, it always does harm whether it attempt to govern on the broad theatre of a nation, or in the narrower circle of a community, school, family, or individual, — in civil, or in moral and religious affairs. Wherever human nature is to be dealt with, in the present existence, we can see that the removal of all grounds of fear, or of painful necessity, would at length prove an evil incomparably greater than any which we now encounter; it would be like dissolving the spheres by abrogating the law of repulsion as the complement to that of attraction." *

These are weighty and momentous words. As thus expounded, Universalism will hardly be thought by anybody to give signs of 'diseased sentimentalism,' or of being 'the exaggeration or perversion of philanthropy;' and upon the basis of these facts and principles, it can alone be made most potent for the work of human redemption. It is undeniable that so the Bible holds and sets forth the goodness of God. Can we improve upon its method?

There is another view of the subject, too, which must not be overlooked — a view very clearly involved, indeed, as Dr. Ballou puts the case, but that has not hitherto received the recognition to which its importance entitles it. The goodness of God, in its very nature, is unappeasable, unrelenting, in its demands. A love less determined and enduring would tire in the work of human recovery, abandoning the obdurate and impenitent to themselves. But His love is inexorable, unconquerable. It never will let go, steadily

* Universalist Quarterly, vol. vii. pp. 286–290.

pursuing its purpose to bring all souls into harmony with itself, however benumbed or obstinate any may be, through whatever terrible furnaces of penalty and pain it may become necessary to lead them.

Better than any dogmatic statement or argumentation, on this point, are the words of George McDonald, in Robert Falconer's talk with his poor, weak, lost father,* — words that none of us would accept as to precise form, perhaps, but that in spirit are not only richly suggestive concerning this persistent, consuming love of God, but also as to the moral inertness which is one of the chief hinderances in the way of the confirmed sinner's return: —

"'Father,' repeated Robert, 'you've got to repent, and God won't let you off, and you needn't think it. You'll have to repent some day.'

"'In hell, Robert,' said Andrew. . . .

"'Yes, either on earth or in hell. Would it not be better on earth?'

"'But it will be no use in hell,' he murmured.

"In those few words lay the germ of the preference for hell of poor souls, enfeebled by wickedness. They will not have to *do* anything there — only to moan and cry, and suffer forever — they think. It is effort, the outgoing of the living will, that they dread. The sorrow, the remorse of repentance, they do not so much regard. It is the action it involves; it is the having to turn, be different, and do differently, that they shrink from; and they have been taught to believe that this will not be required of them there, in that awful refuge of the will-less. I do not say they think thus; I only say their dim, vague, feeble feelings are such as, if they grew into thought, would take this form. But tell them that the fire of God without and within them will compel them to bethink themselves; that the vision of an open door beyond the smoke and the flames will ever urge them to call up the ice-bound will, that it may obey; that the torturing spirit of God in them will keep their consciences awake, — not to remind them of what they ought to have done, but to tell them what they *must* do now, — and hell will no longer fascinate them. Tell them that there is *no* refuge from the compelling love of God, save that love itself, — that He is in hell, too, and that, if they make their bed in hell, they shall not escape Him, and then, perhaps, they will have some true presentiment of 'the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched.'

"'Father, it *will* be of use in hell,' said Robert; 'God will give you no rest even there.'" †

* Pp. 493, 494.

† As these pages are about leaving my hands for the printer's, our papers give us the admirable sermon of Rev. J. M. Pullman, before the Convention at Washington, in which, with others, both these points

There is much in the spirit of all this, as I said, for us to think of. The love of God is, beyond all controversy, the central and most precious truth of the Gospel. No jot must we lessen the stress and prominence we have given it. The most influential 'evangelical' pulpits in the land to-day, those that are most mightily touching the keys of the popular heart, are made what they are by the preaching of this truth. We must not surrender a whit of its power to them. There would be no Gospel without it. But the Abyssinians — to say nothing of others nearer home — demonstrate how

made by McDonald are strongly presented. "Love," says Mr. Pullman, "is changeless; it is inexorable. Forever and ever, in any world, under any and every circumstance, it must pursue its objects till its continual desire respecting them is accomplished. . . . God has punished you. While He has seemed in so doing to be devoid of pity, . . . there has always been the alternative of repentance and reconciliation. . . . The possibility of reunion has never been closed." He well says, too, that this doctrine of God's pursuing and inexorable love furnishes "the true terror" for the sinful. "To the awakened mind, God's promise that it shall be restored to virtue comes to bless; but to the unawakened heart that promise comes as a threat, and there can be no terror in all the world so awful as that which comes when one is made to feel that his darling sin . . . is to be withdrawn. . . . Let the dungeons of the prison and the lunatic asylum, let the walls that have echoed with horrible shrieks, let the ears that have become hardened with such cries, tell us what they know of the terrors of restoration. Then shall we understand that it is no holiday matter, that it is nothing for us to throw ourselves laughingly upon, that God has issued His decree that He will at last have all souls redeemed, and brought back pure into His kingdom." And, commenting upon this sermon, the *Christian Leader* well says: "We get down to the core of our theology when we recognize that the love of God is inexorable. As the preacher pertinently put it, the Divine Love is a consuming fire. . . . The statement that God will by no means clear the guilty is only half understood until it is construed to mean that He will by no means permit him to remain in his guilt. The most momentous truth of revelation is that no soul can escape the decree which has ordained that it shall be holy, harmless, undefiled. And what an irresistible power is in this searching truth! Once get it fairly before the minds of men that there is absolutely no escape from the decree that they shall be good, and how mightily will your appeal for purity, honor and righteousness move them! It is the delusion that there is some way out of this inflexible grasp of Immortal Love that permits the vain artifices to which men so generally resort. Universalism teaches that there is no escape from the purpose of God to have all men saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth. It thus teaches what the saintly Henry Scougal felt when he exclaimed, 'To go anywhere wrong is to run against the love of God, which every way circumvents us and drives us back.'"

So the New Departure has, in this respect, begun.

it may be held only for evil. Universalism, we must cause it to be everywhere understood, is no ministry of this truth in any such direction. It is a gospel of love, we must insist, but of no mere good-nature, of no sentimental laxity, that simply pities wrong-doing, and talks only in gentle and persuasive tones, and sprinkles its delicate perfumes, and dilutes God's administration into a reign of mere sympathetic indulgence, as if there were no such thing as sin to be punished, and no such severe and terrific facts as make up one side of God's appointments. His government has many sides and many instruments, we are to remember. The Bible talks of His wrath as well as of His love, because, in a mere natural view, His retributions seem to indicate displeasure. But though His love tempers and explains the expression as symbolic, it does not wholly explain away its significance as a symbol. There is always grave and sometimes fearful meaning in it; and any theory of God or His government which fails to recognize this meaning, and to give it due place, is so far one-sided, and to this extent false.

This, then, is the New Departure whereunto we are called in this particular. God's words to us include 'Woe!' as well as 'Blessed!' We are summoned henceforth more discriminatingly to enforce both, availing ourselves, as some have always done, of all the grounds of appeal thus furnished; only bearing constantly in mind, and never failing duly to emphasize, the fact that, however God may deal with us, He is our FATHER, perpetually true to a Father's name and obligations, and, even amidst His severest inflictions, however relentlessly, still always beneficently seeking our welfare. In a word, the Goodness of God must so take form in our thought, and so be presented to others, as to lead alike us and them up to His throne, to adore that marvellous Love, and that infinite, unwearied, inflexible Patience, which, numbering the very hairs of our heads, clings to us, watches over us, pleads with us, punishes us as we deserve, disciplines us as we need, and, through whatever terrible paths of sorrow or of suffering He may lead us, never lets us go, and never will let us go, till, availing ourselves of His helps, and responding to His appeals, we all come home, to fulfil His purpose, and find our peace in harmony with Him forever.

CHAPTER IV.

"BOUGHT WITH A PRICE."

THERE is no saving power in Christianity, except as there is first a personal interest in Christ; and such an interest is possible only as there is to inspire it some fitting sense of what Christ has done for us, and of the reality and magnitude of the obligations under which he has placed us.

If, then, Universalism is to be made more religiously effective, this is one of the points to which increased attention must systematically be given. We have always made Christ prominent. But, as the rule, have we not made him prominent chiefly in his general relations — as the means of God's appointment, destined certainly to redeem our race? Have we equally pressed his personal relations and claims, and our personal obligations? These questions found their answer in our first chapter.

How shall we, to best purpose, press these personal relations and claims, and our consequent obligations? is, therefore, I believe, just now, one of the inquiries of most urgent interest to our future usefulness. And, as I state the inquiry, Paul's words to the Corinthians, "Ye are not your own, *for ye are bought with a price*," seem to me to suggest the best answer. Ingratitude is universally held in odium. So far as any moral sentiment asserts itself, mankind are always touched by undeserved sacrifices in their behalf. To the same extent, then, that we can penetrate men with the feeling that they belong to Christ by virtue of what it has cost him to serve them, we shall awaken them to a sense of these personal relations and obligations to him. Herein is the explanation of the efficacy of what is called evangelical preaching, so far as it has ever moved and won hearts. It assigns to Christ a specific work for our sake, and so compels the feeling of obligation to him. Much of its apparent success, it is true, is due to fright, and nervous excitement, and mercenary

and terrific appeals, quite out of place in any Christian pulpit, producing results only *seemingly* religious, and not seldom working injury alike to the convert and the church. But that it has been instrumental in the real conversion of many souls, inducing their genuine consecration to God, is equally undeniable. Proceeding on a false theory of our exposure, such conversions have nevertheless been wrought by a true sense of Christ's self-sacrifice. The exposure has been assumed to be, our liability to endless perdition, under God's wrath and curse; but as the cross has been pictured, and the pitying Saviour has been portrayed hanging upon it, forgetful of himself in his love for us, willing to die that we might live, and the appeal has been urged, *Can* you be indifferent to such an interest in your welfare? the loving spirit of Christ has shone through all encompassing errors, and the effect has invariably been to awaken to penitence and attract to a religious life, in proportion as attention has been secured, and the reality of the sacrifice has come home to thought and conscience. Much as we may abhor its theory of redemption, justice compels the confession that, as *so* administered, 'orthodoxy' has proved itself widely — and despite its terrible misconceptions, beneficently — potent for religious ends; and a host of devoted and saintly souls, won many of them from open and flagrant courses of sin, have, through the centuries, been wedded to Christ by it in a sense of obligation which has mastered every faculty, and made their whole subsequent lives one continued and chivalric purpose to love and serve a Saviour who has done so much for them. It is for us, on the basis of our better interpretation, if we wish to have our labors accompanied with similar signs following, to be equally specific in setting forth what Christ has done for us, and in urging home its appeal. Generalities move nobody. Talk to a man in a vague, miscellaneous way about favors conferred upon him, and, ordinarily, little or no impression is made; but let some one leap into the water to save his life, or lose a limb, or shed so much as a drop of blood for him, and the probability is, that he will ever after feel himself in debt to his benefactor. With a like direct-

ness of appeal, *we* must seek to impress people with as vivid and realistic a sense of what Christ has done to befriend and save them. For all *religious* purposes, we might as well cease to be, if we do not.

Hence the importance of this fact that we are "bought with a price." It is the central fact in Christ's relations to us. The entire plan of redemption, so far as he is a party in it, grows out of this — that he loved us and gave himself for us, "a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." There was, indeed, as we believe, no bargain in the case. The 'evangelical' theory has always assumed that there must have been; that a price could really be paid only in some such commercial sense. On this account, as the Bible speaks of our bondage to Satan, it was at one time supposed that the ransom was paid to him. Then, as the absurdity of this became apparent, the theory now current obtained — the theory, scarcely less absurd and even more barbarous, that Christ had to buy off God from His relentless purpose of vengeance, by suffering in our stead an equivalent for our endless woe. We hold no such theories. We pronounce them as derogatory to God as they are degrading to the conception of our salvation. But the price at which we have been bought, we insist, is none the less real. There was no wrath or curse of God, no impending sword, no endless woe, from which it was needful for Christ to purchase our escape. But there was sin; there was ignorance; there was selfishness with its canker and its curse; there was pain for which there was no healing, and sorrow that had no consolation; there was spiritual darkness, destitution, death. These were more than any material hell could be. From these we needed deliverance, and because of these the world needed the infusion of some fresh moral force, an element of Divine life, for its regeneration. Therefore Christ came — to teach us; to awaken and inspire us; to make us conscious of God and spiritually self-conscious; and thus to save us by putting us into electric contact with imperishable realities, by making sin abhorrent to us, and by so shedding something of his own vitality into us "that we might have life, and have it more abundantly."

But all this could be done only at the cost of loneliness and pain, of obloquy and toil, of the ignominy and anguish of the cross. And this was the price at which he bought us — *this giving of himself, a willing sacrifice, to suffer and to die for our salvation*; — a price paid to no being or law, as a consideration for our release, but paid as mothers pay weary days and sleepless nights in the sick rooms of their children, for their recovery; paid as the patriots of our revolution paid their hardships and blood to ransom us from British oppression, and as later soldiers and patriots paid their valor and their lives to maintain the institutions thus founded; paid as sacrifice has ever been the price of privilege, and as hazard and suffering are the usual cost at which great blessings are bought.

Christ is an idea and a principle. But he is more. He is a pervading fact. Asking as to the origin of the world and the wonderful phenomena of which it is so full, everything points to God. God is written in an alphabet of light and beauty on the heavens, and in hieroglyphics of verdure, grandeur and use on all the face of the earth. God is whispered by the breeze; is sung by the birds and the waving corn; is preached by the rolling thunder and by the everlasting throbbing of the ocean. And so, if we ask as to the origin of the ideas, institutions and influences by which we are most enriched and benefited, we are just as certainly pointed to Christ. Efforts have been made to eliminate him as a factor in modern progress; to explain it on various grounds of climate, geographical position, intellectual conditions, and other hypotheses. But he is not to be eliminated. Whatever simulation of facts may be contrived, whatever specious web of appearances may be woven, to get rid of him, he meets us everywhere; and every stream of good by which our lives are watered and fertilized, if followed up to its source, leads us back to the tomb in Joseph's garden, — to the cross on Calvary, — to the sea-shore where Christ taught, or to the mountain where he prayed, — and finally to the manger in Bethlehem where he was born. All modern history is full of him. As a distinguished historian has said, his life "is the greatest event

in the annals of time. The former ages had been a preparation for it; the latter unroll from it." Whatever we may know, believe, or have, worth the having or keeping, no man can say that it would have been ours without Christ. He has quickened thought; animated investigation; educated taste; created a new conscience; refined and ameliorated law; sanctified home; suggested and inspired every moral and social reform. He has shed abroad a new class of convictions, hopes and expectations; has furnished a new ideal of character, and the materials and incentives for attaining it; has lifted life into grander relations, filled it with more exalted aspirations, clothed it with loftier meanings. Like the sunlight and the rain, his religion sheds its blessings for the benefit of all; and no neglect is gross enough, no unbelief perverse enough to hinder it from shedding something of its benediction upon us, or to enable any one to say, It does nothing for me. As a spiritual essence pervades all material forms, as the air we breathe surrounds the globe, vitalizing, beautifying all, so Christ pervades everything about us, encompassing us with his benign ministries, bathing our lives with refreshment, and filling them with whatever makes them most a joy.

And whatever thus points us back to Christ is somehow a reminder of the price at which we have been bought. Not one of these gifts or blessings in which, directly or indirectly, we so share, could have been ours if Christ had not purchased it by the life of weariness and deprivation, of contempt and sacrifice which he lived for us, and by the death of shame and agony, and yet of sublime endurance and forgiving love, which he died for us. All that is meant by our Christian knowledge, and every privilege peculiar to our Christian birth, — our faith in God, our familiarity with the terms of Divine pardon and acceptance, our assurance of immortality, — all our means of Christian culture, and all that renders our Christian civilization so superior to every other, and so affluent in the elements of personal and social welfare, — in one word, all that is included in our redemption, here or hereafter, bears the impress of the cross, and comes to us at Christ's cost — as the fruit of some pang

by which he was tortured, of some drop of the blood that trickled from his brow or side, of some sorrow that he bore, or of some self-denial that he accepted for our sake: and could we but for once distinctly gather up in our thought all that this price involved — the wrestle and the travail, — the homelessness and the weariness, — the isolation from all human sympathy, because his best friends even could so little understand him, — the haunting sense of being constantly dogged, hunted, hated, without cause, — the garden agony, — the betrayal and the desertion, — the stripes and mockery and buffetings, — the walk to Calvary, fainting beneath the cross, and the excruciating anguish of slowly dying upon it, and then feel, each one of us, *All this was for* ME, we should never again be indifferent, or fail to feel, or to make others feel, what such a price demands.

To make real to ourselves and others, then, this price at which we have been bought, is the one thing we have to do, if we would have our Church mighty in winning souls to Christ, feeling that they belong to him. "Christ and him crucified" was the burden of Apostolic faith and labor. It must be no less the burden of ours; and if God is speaking any word to us as a Church, this clearly is part of it, "*By this conquer.*" The cross is the symbol of Christ's power: and always, we shall, personally, have the richest Christian experience in proportion as we cling to it, appreciating its meaning; and as a Church, we shall attract and help to save souls on the same condition. Nor must the cross lose a whit of its New Testament significance, or glory, at our hands. Our failure is certain so far as it does. Mothers, watching in the sick rooms of their children, and patriots, periling life for their country, were just now referred to as exemplifying how Christ has bought us. But all such examples fall far short of paralleling his whole work in our salvation. They indicate only the general nature of the price he paid. They do not at all illustrate its exact relations and spiritual efficacy. Christ suffered and died as a martyr, but not simply as a martyr. Rationalize upon the subject as we may, we still have to say with Paley, "that the death of Jesus Christ is spoken of in reference to human salvation in terms and in a manner in which the death of no

person whatever is spoken of besides. Others have died martyrs as well as our Lord. Others have suffered in a righteous cause as well as he. But that is said of his death and sufferings which is not said of any one else. An efficacy and a concern are ascribed to them in the business of human salvation which are not ascribed to any other." * It is a part of the honorable record of the Universalist Church, that to this view of the subject it has been, theoretically, steadfastly committed. Our call is, if we are more effectually to do the work of a Church, that not only shall we continue thus theoretically committed to this view, but that we give it increased stress and prominence, and therefore increased power.

Increased *power*, I say: for let it not be forgotten that the crucified Christ is the final power by which the world is to be saved. "And I, *if I be lifted up from the earth*, will draw all men unto me," said our Lord (John xii. 32). Only in the cross did his ability to save souls, and therefore the means for the world's redemption, become complete. And why? For many reasons — chief among which was the fact that only thus could a superior ownership in us be best asserted, and we be brought to surrender ourselves to its will. "*We are not our own:*" this is the grand lesson of the cross. The general assumption is, first, that we *are* our own, and second, that we have a right, therefore, to be, or to do, what we please. Hence the unbridled self-assertion which is the one root of all wrong and sin. Of course, there is a sense in which both these assumptions are true. But in the highest sense neither is true. Even in our mere human relations, considering the vast net-work in which we are woven, we are not our own. We belong to the Past, as the heirs of its blessings; to the Present, as the stewards of its responsibilities; to the Future, as the guardians of its welfare. We belong to our parents; to our brothers and sisters, if we have them; to our families and homes; to our associates and friends; to every human being who has done us a kindness, or who needs our aid; to our country; to our race. How much more, then, to Christ and to God! We have not a faculty — of body or of mind, we have not a gift

* Sermon on "The Efficacy of the Death of Christ," Part I.

— of money, position, or privilege, which we are at liberty to use with sole reference to our own wills, without regard even to these human relations, — much less as if we did not belong to God, and to the Saviour who has so purchased us. This is the central fact of which God, through Christianity, is seeking to make us aware. This is the meaning of His Fatherhood. It is equally the meaning of our Brotherhood. The cross is the consummate proclamation of this fact, in concrete. It is God's sense of ownership and His great consequent interest in us, — it is Christ's marvellous love, willing at any price to gain possession of us, put into sensible form ; and in whomsoever its power is at all felt, self-assertion is so far vanquished, and the will of God, as expressed in Christ, becomes supreme.

Here, then, summarily, in this particular, is our new work — to so hold and preach the crucified Christ as to fill souls with the consciousness that they are not their own, because bought with a price, and thus to inspire them with the purpose in all things to make God's will in Christ supreme. Theoretically, there is little occasion for labor on these points. Theoretically, whoever believes in God and Christ, more or less accepts the lessons of the cross as to their ownership in us ; and Universalists especially, however nominal, are fond of appealing to these ties which link us to God and the Saviour as, in their nature, indissoluble, and thus to demonstrate that no soul can be finally lost. And in our distress and sorrow, when disappointment comes and our earthly props fail us, who does not find it pleasant to think of what Christ has done to comfort and save us, and to fall back on God, assured that through whatever gloom we may be led, or however we may seem to be forsaken, He reckons us as His own, and will never leave nor forget us ? What we want is a practical faith in what is now, to a great extent, only theory. What we want is a new unction and emphasis in urging these conceded truths as elements of a sanctifying experience — so that theory, argument, and comfortable assurance shall be translated into reverent and holy living, and become the intellectual basis upon which our Church shall make itself widely felt in Christ's behalf for the salvation of souls.

CHAPTER V.

CHRIST ESSENTIAL.

The fact that Christ has bought us at so great a price, establishes his claim on our grateful service; and the nature of his appointment and the purpose of his relations to us being what they are, he is, clearly, if we owe him any such service, entitled to be enthroned as paramount in the mastery of our lives. But is he, in any sense, essential to us? Do we, for any reason, owe it to ourselves as well as to him to become his disciples, and thus to make him the life of our being? It is one of the gravest of the many allegations to be made against the sacrificial theology, that it has poisoned the popular mind with the idea that he is *not* essential — except as an insurance against fire, or as the shelter of an overcoat or an umbrella amidst a storm, or as any expedient to save us from outward exposure or harm, is essential. One of the ever-recurring questions by way of objection to Universalism, as is well known, long has been, What is the use of Christ, or of faith in him, or of worship, or of anything we call religion, if there be no wrath of God, and no everlasting perdition, from which we need to be rescued? Only because we are under the condemnation of the Divine law, and Christ is an "expedient by which God can consistently and honorably forgive" us, the prevalent teaching has been, have we any occasion for him; and thousands of professed Christians — many of them far better people than such language would indicate — have habitually said, and thousands are still saying, Convince us that Christ has no *such* use to answer in our behalf, and we will give him no further thought or service; we will henceforth defy God, and revel in sin. In other words, as a contrivance enabling us to 'make our peace with God,' and evade the demands of justice, as a rescue from the fires of an endless hell, Christ is a convenience, — in a sense, a necessity; but in no other sense is he essential, or at all important to us.

Happily, in the growing Christianization of opinion, this idea is giving place to a clearer insight into his relations to our interior spiritual life; but this is still, in substance, the doctrine of the creeds, as it is the wide-spread and mischievous popular impression.

Against all such teaching we have vigorously battled. Christ, we have affirmed, is God's provision for intrinsic human needs. This is our providential message, amidst the misleading theories of the Church — put upon our lips by every page of the Bible which explains man's condition or Christ's work. He is, we exist on purpose to proclaim, the bread of life; the light of the world; the water of which if any drink they shall thirst no more; the rest and peace of souls. And charged with this message, our business is to arouse men, as nothing else can, to understand that in no sense is he an expedient, or a convenience; that the need for him is vital, imperative, universal; that by no possibility can anything be successfully substituted in his stead; that to possess and appropriate him is to fulfil every condition of highest life and sweetest joy; and that not to have him, whoever one may be, or whatever else one may have or know, is inevitably to lack that which can alone give the ripest character, the most blessed experience, the completest manhood or womanhood to any soul; and the New Departure to which we are called in this regard is, a new and more determined effort so to give emphasis to these things, that, wherever our influence goes, it shall, to the same extent, be understood and felt, as never before, that Christ is thus, intrinsically and indispensably, a necessity to every soul.

That Christ is such a necessity is proved, look for the facts of human experience where we will. Let it suffice here to ask, in what state he found the world when he came into it? On many accounts, the period was a splendid one — the culmination of the finest possibilities, alike Jewish and heathen, in the way of human culture and civilization; rich in artistic taste, in external refinements, in purely intellectual ability and attainments. But spiritually the world was empty and decaying. A frequent New Testament term to represent its condition is '*perish*'; and the word has a

depth of meaning, as thus applied, which has been but feebly apprehended. Even the Jews, privileged as they had been, were sunk into an inane formalism, out of which all soul of genuine emotion or service had departed. Those whose only sustenance was in the mythologies or philosophies of the time were in a still worse case. "The world by wisdom knew not God." Human reason and conscience had demonstrated their insufficiency, unaided, for the highest purposes of morals and religion. The moral vigor of the race was exhausted. Its manhood was dying out. It had no principle or power competent to quicken it into 'newness of life.' Its recuperative energies, its ability for self-recovery, its spiritual stamina were gone; and but for God's succor, infusing some new life-blood, some saving force into it, the world would have rotted and collapsed in its utter degeneracy and corruption.

That this is the state of things everywhere indicated in the New Testament, is known to all who read it. The Apostle puts the sum of it all into few words when he says, "When we were without strength," — i. e., morally impotent, unable to help ourselves, — "in due time, Christ died for the ungodly." And history outside the New Testament only too sadly confirms its representations. Alas! we have but to turn over the pages which tell of the inner life of Greece or Rome, — have but to go abroad among the nations, and study the spectacle, morally and religiously, everywhere presented, not merely to find wickedness, for much of that exists now even in our most Christian communities, and always will exist until the world's regeneration is accomplished, but to be shocked at the coarseness of the debauchery and debasement which characterized even the best life of the most advanced peoples, or to be somehow furnished with impressive evidence of the world's need of a Quickener and Redeemer. Paul's epitome (Rom. i. 21–32; ii. 1, 17–24) does but graphically present the undeniable facts.

Christ came as the succor thus required: God's remedy for the decaying energies as well as for the sin of the world; the fresh life-blood, to quicken; "the power of God and the wisdom of God," to vitalize and redeem. Our fourth chap-

ter briefly glanced at what he was as an answer to then existing needs, and at what he has since been in the world. We cannot rationally explain the facts of history, either in their personal or their social, in their moral or their political aspects and significance, except as we confess his presence and power. And what has been will be. The decadence into which the world had spiritually fallen before Christ came does but show in what state it would now, or at any time, be, were he and what he has done withdrawn. Now, or in the future, as in the past, there is help or hope for souls only in Christ and the life that is in him; only in Christianity and God's redeeming energy in it.

There are those, indeed, who tell us that the world has outgrown Christianity. As well might they allege that the earth has outgrown the sun, or that human nature has outgrown itself. Stages and processes in the progress of our education may be outgrown; but do we, therefore, outgrow either the capacity to know, or the need of instruction, that we may know? In like manner, the world may outgrow certain forms of thought *about* God, and duty, and immortality; but it does not, therefore, outgrow *them*, nor the necessity of being informed concerning them. No doubt some interpretations of Christianity, and some accompanying theories of miracle and inspiration as connected with it, have been outgrown. But to outgrow these, is one thing; to outgrow Christianity, is quite another. Christianity is founded in our very nature, and miracle and inspiration were necessities, if Divine instruction was to be specially communicated, or we were to have any assurance of its genuineness and truth. To outgrow these, or our need of them, is, therefore, as impossible as it is that our finite nature shall outgrow its finite limitations; as impossible as it is that the human understanding shall outgrow its need of a superior illumination, if it is to have any clear or satisfactory knowledge of spiritual things; or that sorrow shall outgrow its need of consolation; or that tempted and sinful souls shall outgrow the need of some help to arouse and strengthen, to vitalize and save them.

Science may enlarge the horizon of its discoveries, more and more 'reading God's thoughts after Him,' and those

there may be who will imagine that Christ is to be thus supplanted, — some of them, possibly, that God is to be shown as having no longer a place in the universe. Others may talk vauntingly of reason and philosophy, of the intuitions of conscience and the soul, of human progress and development, insisting that these will fulfil every use which it has been thought Christianity is requisite to serve. All this has been, and is likely to be again. But so long as the human soul remains what it is, and the conditions of human quickening and regeneration abide what they are, Christianity is the one thing which cannot be outgrown. The world *will* outgrow theories in science, and systems of philosophy, and forms of speculative thought, and inductions from reason and conscience — for all these it has, many times, successively outgrown and cast aside; but Christ, or Christianity, never. Just as soon may the worlds outgrow space. Suppose them possessed with the idea that they want more room; where will they find it? With equal pertinence, we may ask, what field is there for growth outside the infinite scope of Christ's spirit, or the comprehensiveness of his plans? What is there beyond the universal Fatherhood and the universal Brotherhood, which are the sum of his teachings? What better than the golden rule which he lays down, — or than the love which he enjoins, — or than the regard for man which he enforces as the condition of acceptance with God? What purer, more unselfish, more magnanimous than the character on which he insists? What tenderer or more inclusive than his sympathy? What more ample than his consolations? What simpler than the way to God which he opens? What more certain or more inspiring than his disclosures of the life immortal? What grander or more encouraging than the spiritual enfranchisement and redemption of our race of which he assures us?

Those who talk so much about outgrowing Christ should answer these questions, and tell us how we are to outgrow what is so illimitable and universal, — tell us into what, having outgrown him, as they allege, they have advanced, or into what, outgrowing him, we are to go. Let the man who combines most of intellect and heart unfold into his loftiest possi-

bilities, and still, alike in thought and affection, he will find Christ immeasurably above him, saying, Come up higher. Or, let any man — the wisest, the most 'advanced,' the most accustomed to boast himself of what he imagines is to supplant Christ, and thus to think himself superior to any need of him, be stricken into helplessness, or be humbled or prostrated by pain, or sickness, or some great sorrow piercing into the quick of his being, — by the agony of bereavement, — by the awakening of conscience and a disturbing sense of sin, — by no matter what, so that the shell of learned or materialistic assumption in which he is encased be broken, and the bubble of his conceit be made to collapse, and he be brought to some genuine consciousness of what he is and of his real needs; and amidst all that he has been accustomed to think sufficient — lacking only the Christ he has flattered himself he has outgrown — he will find himself, spiritually, in the condition of the traveller, who, famishing in the desert, pushed from him the bag which he had hoped contained water or food, exclaiming, "Ah me! it is only pearls!" Retort and crucible, telescope and microscope, philanthrophy, and philosophy, reason and nature and schemes for human improvement are severally important in their places and for their legitimate uses; but when grief is to be assuaged, when starving hearts are to be fed and soothed, when a pitying God is to be found, and pardon is to be assured, or when even the least of the spiritual cravings which Christ fully satisfies is to be ministered to, these things are to the soul only as so many stones to one who is dying for bread. In these straits, whatever else one may have outgrown, his experience will demonstrate that he has not outgrown a need for Christ; and give but him to this humbled, awakened man, brought down from his inflated self-sufficiency, so that he shall clasp his hand and feel the inflowing of his presence, and he will have, in him, a sense of God's nearness and pity, an assurance of God's helpful grace and pardon, an experience of God's peace, and a power lifting him above all his vanity and broken-heartedness and sin, that, while enabling him to see a new meaning in every revelation of science and every suggestion of philosophy, in every delight of human knowledge and every

indication of human progress, will put him into spiritual heights and satisfactions of which he had never dreamed before.

"Lord, to whom shall we go?" once said Peter to Christ; "thou hast the words of eternal life." And this but puts into speech the universal outcry of our spiritual consciousness, however or in whomsoever awakened. The same necessities of human nature continually assert themselves; and, whatever changes or modifications may occur in opinions *about* him, or in the interpretation of his words, Christ, "the same yesterday, to-day and forever," will be the one sole sufficient answer to these necessities, so long as men have need of God and the assurance of His fatherly love, and the conscience has need of guidance, and the heart has need of peace, and the erring have need of forgiveness, and the dying have need of "the power of an endless life."

It is this fact that we are called to emphasize and enforce, summoning men to that practical appropriation of Christ which is essential to their best life. Ignorant, tempted, weak, suffering, sinful, they are to be made to feel it is in vain that we turn to reason or philosophy, to science or our own intuitions; in vain that we invoke any power of progress or 'development' in ourselves. 'None but Christ, none but Christ,' reiterated the brave old martyr, amidst the tortures of the stake; and so, attempt what substitutes we may, that which is deepest in us will compel every one of us, like him, at some time to say. Christ is the quickening spirit, and only he. He is "the way, the truth and the life;" "the light which lighteth every man;" "the fountain of living water;" "the bread of life;" "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." In our weakness there is no hand like his to make us strong. On the bed of pain, his ministries alone can soothe us to rest. When our hopes are shattered, no voice like his can compose our disappointment, or inspire us with resignation and trust. When our hearts are wounded, there is no balm like his to heal. Standing above our dead, only he transfigures death, and shows us the path of our departed illumined in the radiance of an immortal life. And in our moral impotence and disease, in the waywardness of our wills, in our

conflicts with temptation, in our bondage to sin and our insubordination to God, our only sufficient help, no less surely, must come from him. Only at the foot of his cross can we have that loathing of sin, or be melted into that condition of penitence and consecration, essential to newness of life; and only in contact with him, as the medium of God's regenerative grace, can we effectively learn the lesson of duty, or be invigorated, vitalized, saved. None like him, none but he, can fill us with the idea of excellence, or give us 'power to become the sons of God.'

And what is thus true of individuals is equally true of the race. Humanity is but the aggregate of individuals, and there is help or redemption for it only where help and redemption are to be found for the feeblest soul that makes part of it. Nations and the race can be lifted up only as individuals are lifted up. Why is Turkey 'the sick man' of Europe? Why, mainly, but that Christianity has not been, for these many centuries, an element in the thought and life of the people? And what is it that, by common consent, as we watch the wondrous change in progress in Japan, is so assuring us of a nobler destiny for that hitherto exclusive nation? What but the indications that Christianity — first, in the ideas and usages of our Christian civilization, and then through the introduction of the Bible, and as a transforming faith — is to become a power in minds and hearts there? Christ is the one answer to the universal need. In him alone the conditions for the world's spiritual cure and elevation anywhere are fulfilled. "Without him we can do nothing." Human wisdom, and the pride of reason, and the vanity of 'culture,' and the pompous self-sufficiency of men unwilling to acknowledge their dependence, may dream their dreams, and propose their plans, for the amelioration of society, and the regeneration of the world, without him; but they will prove, every one of them, like the empty lamps of the virgins — prove only dreams and failures; and from them all the world must turn at length to Christ: "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

In the power of this truth we are to make ourselves

morally mighty; and only as we become possessed and instinct with this power, as ministers, as a people, as an organized and evangelizing Church, whatever else we may have or be, is there any positive and saving work, or any desirable Christian future, for us. *In this be strong,* is the one word that comes from all God's voices to us.

CHAPTER VI.

SIN.

It is the penalty of all reform that those who wage it, opposing one error or abuse, necessarily incur the risk of swinging into another. Perhaps this has had no more striking illustration than is furnished in the rebound from the exaggerated doctrines of the sacrificial theology concerning sin, — as to its infinite enormity, on the one hand, and as to the vindictive and horrible punishment by which only can God duly attest His hatred of it, on the other. Not to enter into the broad field thus opened, however, it is enough now to ask whether we, as a people, have not shared in this extreme rebound. Arraigning and controverting these doctrines, have we not had speculations among us, and even definitely declared conclusions, the inevitable effect of which, logically, has been either to make sin an inconsiderable affair, a slight disturbance which is to be beneficently overruled, or to deny that there is really any such thing? Have there not been periods in our history, indeed, when such theories have to no small extent determined the burden of our pulpits, and the thought of our people? And do they not yet quite largely mingle in the opinions that prevail among us?

But are such theories morally healthful? Are they favorable to quickness of conscience, or to a propelling and inextinguishable sense of obligation? Do they tend to distress us with a rebuking consciousness of the guilt of sin, or to induce humiliation and penitence on account of it? In few words, are they fitted spiritually to arouse and stimulate anybody? to fill anybody with a loathing and abhorrence of sin? to move anybody to feel himself a sinner, and to cry out with Paul, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" or to stir believers or churches to zeal for the conversion of souls?

These are important questions: is it not time that they should be seriously pondered?

Paul speaks of sin as "exceeding sinful": is it so? Conscience recognizes force in the word *ought*, and therefore recognizes the desert of goodness, and the demerit of sin: is conscience thus intimating facts, or only suggesting phantasms? The Bible is a continuous rebuke of sin, denouncing God's retributions upon it, expostulating against it, and pleading that we will abandon it as not only a curse, but as in itself a heinous wrong: is the Bible, in all this, imposing upon us by using words without meaning? These inquiries touch points that are vital to all that bears the name of moral science, and therefore vital to the whole subject of character and life. Of course, I am not ignorant of the answers made to them on behalf of the views of sin at which they are aimed. But with these answers, and the metaphysics they involve, I have now no concern. Such metaphysics, splitting hairs, throwing dust, pressing half-truths as if they were the whole, or the side of a truth without regard to its relations, proportions, or qualifications, using words that keep their seeming to the ear, but lose or change their meaning to the sense, and eliminating the very life out of every fundamental moral idea, have been our bane. It is time that we were wholly emancipated from them. I shall be tempted into no discussion with them here. I propose only to deal with the subject practically, as it meets us on the pages of the Bible, in our unperverted consciousness, and in the instinctive judgments of conscience and common sense. I have a conviction — the result of years of observation, and that, for some time past, has been every year growing deeper and stronger — that we have widely failed to feel and enforce the enormity and "exceeding sinfulness" of sin. Not that we have been indifferent to moral obligation, for, as the fact, no people have been more keenly alive to such obligation, or more observant of it, *on its human side*; not that we have not had much sensitiveness, much faithful preaching, and much sincere shame and contrition on account of sin; but that we have not, as a people, been pervaded by any such deep and remorseful sense as the Bible demands of what it is as an offence

against God, and thus of what it is to be a sinner, an unawakened and spiritually thoughtless soul, in His pure sight. We have never said, or acted as if we believed, that sin is right. Very far from it. But we have quite extensively dallied with it, *theoretically*, as if it were not very wrong; and, naturally, the effect of such theoretical dalliance has been a proportionally languid sense of the guilt of sin, a proportionally feeble realization of the necessity of repentance, and a corresponding indifference to the obligations which require a pronounced religious life.

Under these circumstances, I am satisfied, we need a changed style of thinking on this whole subject. A profounder sense of the absolute wrong of sin — not only in its grosser forms, but in all its forms, even in its lightest shadings, a keener consciousness of guilt on account of it, and a deeper and more thoroughly prostrating conviction of the solemnity and imperativeness of the calls which are summoning us to penitence and consecration to God, are, I believe, among the conditions upon which alone is there for us the increase of spiritual power which we so much desire; nor, I am confident, can our possible destiny as a Church be at all fulfilled except as we at once and henceforth take higher ground than we have been accustomed to occupy in these particulars, and thus commit ourselves to a New Departure, theoretically and practically, in this regard.

A theory was, years ago, extensively current among us, which, happily, is now obsolete, to the effect that sin is exclusively of the body, not of the soul; that, amidst all the contaminations of wickedness and evil indulgence, the soul remains unpolluted, the pure image of God, no party in the evil, as a diamond, imbedded in the mire, in no way partakes in itself of the surrounding defilement. This theory was, and is, so superficial, as well as so opposed — as it seems to me — to every dictate of common sense as applied to the subject, that it could not retain its hold on intelligent minds when even the least degree of moral and intellectual science, or psychological knowledge, began to assert itself. But it was a mischievous element of our denominational life, so far as it ever did prevail; and if it anywhere finds belief now, it finds belief only to the same

mischievous effect. It is hardly a doctrine to be in these days seriously argued against; and yet, should there chance to be those anywhere still addicted to it on the supposition that Paul (Rom. vii.) teaches it, I must beg them to consider these weighty words of Dr. Ballou, transposing two or three of them at the outset: —

"It would be a gross mistake to suppose that St. Paul confines sin to the body alone, or regards the mind, the spirit, of man as incorrupt. He means nothing of this kind, even when he says that he delights in the law of God after the inward man, while the law in his members wars against the law of his mind, bringing him into captivity to the law of sin. Indeed, the mere body, or flesh, strictly speaking, can never sin, though it may work temptations. When taken by itself, it is neither intelligent nor conscious, and is as incapable of moral transgression as any other unintelligent mass of matter. And even when united with mind, as it is in every rational person, it is the mind which feels, knows, and acts through the body as its instrument. It is the mind which recognizes motives, controls impulses, or yields to them; it is the mind which forms within itself the purpose, whether good or bad, and then executes it in overt acts, by means of the body. The mind is the real agent; and it is the mind alone that is guilty and condemned, in the case of sin. If it should be said that this contradicts St. Paul's assertion, that with the mind he served the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin, — we will, for the argument's sake, grant, what is not strictly true, that there is a contradiction in words; but is there any in the meaning? Will any one contend, seriously, that, in serving the law of sin, the mind takes no part, neither premeditates, nor desires, nor balances motives, nor comes to a determination, nor wills, nor puts forth the effort; but that all this is done by about a hundred or two pounds of mere bone, flesh and blood, without any co-operation of the mental power? The utter absurdity of the supposition ought, of itself, to be a sufficient guard against such a misapprehension of the passages referred to. But if this be not enough to satisfy every one, the matter will be put at rest by appealing to St. Paul's habitual recognition of corrupt, defiled, lustful, reprobate, filthy, vain, unrenewed minds and spirit in man. The other writers of the New Testament agree with St. Paul on this point. St. James says, 'The *spirit* that dwelleth within us, lusteth to envy.' . . . St. John says, 'Believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they be of God.' . . .

"Neither can the blind appetites and propensities of the body sin. The farthest they can go in this direction, is, to operate on the mind as impulses or incitements to wrong. If the mind does not consent to an improper indulgence of them, there is no sin, how strongly soever they rage; if it does consent, there is sin, how slightly soever they be felt. . . . To use the phrenological nomenclature, . . . is it the blind propensity, say of destructiveness, or of amativeness, that is conscience-smitten,

struck with remorse, made wretched, and that sometimes repents? or is it the person, he who indulged these impulses unlawfully? Which of the two is it that commits the sin, and suffers the consequences? It is not the impulses that are either good or bad, except as means. There must be an intelligent person to whom they belong, and whose mind, whose will, directs them, before they can have any moral character; and he alone is either the agent, or the responsible subject. . . . It is evident [then], that, by the flesh, the body, its members, &c., Paul means the domination of the senses, in the mind, to the neglect of the spiritual development of our nature. . . . These senses always lie in contact with the mind, with the will; and they communicate to it impulses, which must be either controlled or yielded to, by some exertion of the mental power. . . . If the person voluntarily follows these impulses too far, or neglects to restrain them within their proper limits, then sin begins, and not till then, — begins and continues in his will, or governing faculty." *

Leaving the notion thus disposed of, out of the case, there are two other views which have largely divided our church-opinion upon this subject of sin: 1. That which assigns sin and every other thought, or aim, or act of man directly to God; and 2. That which, though not directly charging sin to Him, represents God as complacent and quite well-satisfied with it, because He can so easily, and will so certainly, overrule it for good. Both these views are to be deprecated, I believe — as grave errors, to be renounced, and especially as serious hinderances, to be cast aside.

I. The first strikes at the root of all moral verities, and transforms the world into a stupendous machine, in which men and women, divested of all self-determining power, are simply serving the uses of so many wheels and springs. What though it is insisted on as the logical sequence of the predicate that God reigns, and is alleged to be the inevitable conclusion if God is to be at all recognized as a factor in human affairs? The premises are unquestionable; but the conclusion does not follow. The error is in so emphasizing God as to ignore man, and in so affirming the Divine Will as a factor in human affairs as to make the human will nothing but a name. That the Divine Will *is* a factor in all human affairs, no one who believes in a Divine Will doubts; but

* Universalist Quarterly, Vol ii., pp. 416, 417, 418, 421.

because there is a Divine Will, is there, therefore, no human will, except in terms? Or, because God is sovereign, has man, as a distinct and responsible agent, no existence? The sovereignty of God is, doubtless, the foundation on which all theology must build, or be, finally, no theology. Either there is a God, God over all possible contingencies, or there is no God. But man, in his place, is as real as God in His; and to construct a theological system that is also an ethical system in fact as well as in name, recognizing the play of moral forces and ground for praise or blame, man must be assigned a separate, and in a sense, independent individuality, and must be so reasoned from, as well as God. Alike the Bible and our own consciousness attest that we have, each of us, such a distinct personality; and if there is anything I can be said to know, I know that, within certain limitations, I am the master of my own actions, and therefore accountable for them. Every moral instinct of my being is a lie, if it is not so.

But the theory before us denies me any such real self-hood, and resolves me and everything pertaining to me into God. All I do, or will, or think, it avers, is God's will, act, or thought, expressing itself through me, as the click of the telegraph is the expression of the electric fluid behind it. Where, then, is my will? or my individuality? or my accountability? Not one of these attributes can, in any actual moral sense, be alleged of me, except as it can just as well be alleged of the crank of a steam engine, or of a falling stone. However the word may be used, there is in fact no such thing.

Nor is this the worst of it. In thus stripping us of all power of self-determination, and giving the lie to the Bible and our ineradicable sense of freedom and accountability, this theory also strips God of His glory as a moral governor. He is, if this be true, only an infinite mechanic, or the master of a stupendous puppet-show, using souls as so many passive pieces of intelligence, precisely as a machinist uses his pieces of brass and iron, or as the manager of an automatic exhibition directs the movements of his manikins by his touch of the wires, or his adjustment of the springs. Give whatever name you please to such a system, or call the

means by which God so acts in us, or through us, determining what we shall do, motives, influences, or whatever you will, looking beneath *words* to *things*, the purely mechanical nature of the arrangement is manifest. We are clearly not moral beings, — only so many lay figures, curiously constructed to think ourselves self-acting, but going through our appointed motions, obeying or disobeying, reverencing God, or blaspheming and defying Him, loving and serving man, or trampling, defrauding, murdering him, as God adjusts and injects the mechanical forces over which He presides, and in the midst of which He is all.

I hold that these several consequences, not to mention others, place the theory which necessitates them outside the pale of legitimate argument, as any hypothesis which contravenes known and accepted facts is universally conceded to be no subject of argument. Treating the subject on common-sense principles, in any fair use of words in their ordinary meaning, these consequences are inevitable and undeniable, if any result in logic or mathematics can be said to be inevitable or undeniable ; and in view of them, it is impossible not to ask what there is from which evidence can come, that does not protest against such a view of God's relations to human life, so issuing in our non-responsibility, when, stripped of all its metaphysical verbalisms and entanglements, it is fairly and nakedly considered ? Especially should it be noted as the final fact which closes the case against this theory, that it necessarily invalidates all moral distinctions, and renders all action, at bottom, of precisely the same quality. "Well, then," once asked a brother minister of one of the most distinguished advocates of this philosophy, at the close of a long debate upon it, "to sum up the whole matter in few words, virtue and vice, if I understand you, are only names which we give to different phases of human activity, that, in their nature, are essentially the same, inasmuch as both are equally necessitated ?" "Yes," frankly responded the disputant. And to this conclusion, disguise, or seek to evade it, as its advocates may, the argument at last irresistibly conducts us.

And these things being so, is it not clear what the practical influence of such speculations must be, and that if, as

a Church, we are to have any spiritual vitality and power, we must be rid of them? Grant that there have been, and are, those holding, or professing to hold, this philosophy, in whom conscience and an invincible integrity have been stronger than their dangerous theory; grant even that there have been those holding some such theory, who, in an exalted consciousness of God's instant and constant presence, and under the inspiration and guidance of the religious principle thus glowing and regnant within them, have so far risen superior to the natural tendency of such a method of thinking as to be among the world's examples of a rugged and heroic virtue, can there be any reasonable doubt as to what its natural tendency is? Really taken as a direct and positive element into life, must it not impair the sense of responsibility, lessen the strenuousness of religious motive, and leave one at the mercy of impulse, impression, or inclination, however it may prompt? In the nature of things, if I actually live out of this philosophy, testing myself by its standards, *can* I, however much a sinner, feel guilty, or be moved to prostrate myself before God, asking His forgiveness, or be stimulated to self-denial, or struggle, or prayerful consecration and work? Believing that there is no separate, personal *I*, and that what seems to be me is only God behind me, can I feel merit, or demerit, do what I may? Or, if some such feeling will assert itself in me, in spite of my philosophy, can I do otherwise than laugh at it as a curious sensation which has no basis, or justification?

II. The second of the two theories adverted to, though not so fatally mischievous as the first is fitted to be, is nevertheless open to much the same condemnation. We cannot believe that God is complacent, or satisfied, in view of sin, and at the same time feel very seriously troubled ourselves because of it. Inevitably, as the human mind operates, and under the law of influence to which we are subject, attributing such complacency, or satisfaction to Him, we shall more or less share in it, and our repugnance at sin and our feeling of guilt on account of it will be correspondingly abated. This being so, no one can affirm such complacency, or satisfaction, on God's part, or even

entertain it as a possible hypothesis in respect to sin, without moral peril. There is moral safety, because there is any poignant self-condemnation on account of sin, and any abhorrence of it, for us, only as we see it condemned and abhorrent in God's sight.

And if God be the Infinite Holiness, how can sin be otherwise than abhorrent to Him? Being sin, — supposing it to be, according to the Bible and the universal moral consciousness, man's act or intention, and not His own through man as an automaton, it is a denial of Him, or rebellion against Him, aiming to pull down what He would build up, and to build up what He would destroy. How, then, except by denying himself, can He be satisfied or complacent with it? Looking upon His finished creation, indeed, if we may credit the record, He "saw everything that He had made," and pronounced it "very good." This, necessarily, was a satisfaction with man as a part of the creation, and this, too, notwithstanding a clear foresight of his sinfulness; but the satisfaction was not with sin, — only with man in spite of sin, in view of the sublime destiny he would ultimately fulfil. With sin, then as now and always, God was in essential antagonism. Everything in His nature is opposed to it. Every law He has ordained is arrayed, eternally and inexorably, against it. It is the one element in His universe against which He is everywhere in conflict, and for the prevention and expulsion of which He is perpetually at work. His enmity to it is thus shown to be absolute, unappeasable, — something that cannot be qualified, or cease, except as He becomes himself qualified, or ceases to be what He is. There is no significance or worth in the Bible, if it is not so. If it be not so, there is no meaning in language, no such thing as duty; all the invitations and threatenings of God's Word, the life and cross of Christ, and all that God has done and is doing ostensibly to persuade us against sin, or to save us from it, are but so many pretences; the voice of conscience and the sense of responsibility are deceits; we are not moral agents, but things, without personal centre or value; and in all His so-called moral dealings with us, God is but playing an empty game of make-believe, or a monstrous masquerade.

These being the facts, I submit that no man, or company of men, is at liberty to theorize, or to speculate in any way, directly or indirectly, to implicate God with sin, or to compromise this hostility to it so intrinsic and unappeasable in Him. Here, unfortunately, is the perversion to which a beneficent interpretation of the universe is — we may almost say, unavoidably — liable. Men easily fail to discriminate. They are prone to overlook conditions and qualifications, and to jump hastily at conclusions. Because we are assured that all things are pervaded with a merciful meaning, and that even sin is to be somehow made, in spite of itself, to subserve ultimate purposes of good, far too many leap straightway to the inference that sin is not, then, so very bad, or, at most, that while a present curse, it is only the negative side of good, — good, like sorrow, with its reverse side towards us. Against this perversion, or any approach to it, all who reach the sublime assurance of the ultimate triumph of good have need carefully to guard; and it is because of a failure duly to guard against this that we have, so widely, the idea of God's complacency, or satisfaction with sin.

Is it asked, how it happens, conceding God's sovereignty, that sin is in the world, if He is not satisfied that it should exist? For myself, I have an answer entirely sufficient for my own thought; but it has no place here. Admit, if the reader pleases, that it is impossible for *us* to answer the question except by saying that God is satisfied with sin. I hold that answer forbidden by what God is, as well as by the moral consequences which inevitably follow. It is a contradiction in terms, and as such, in the nature of the case, inadmissible — just as much as to say that God can lie. God's intrinsic and invincible antagonism to sin, which is but another name for His unshadowed Holiness, is not to be impeached because of the limitation of our powers. We impugn established human integrity only upon the most direct and indubitable proof, however difficult we may find it to explain unfavorable appearances, because, as we say, what the man *is* absolutely interdicts suspicion, so long as demonstration fails to warrant it. Shall we count God's character as something to be less carefully considered?

It is often asked, Why does God permit so much suffering, — i. e., why has He chosen a system into which it so necessarily enters, if He is not pleased to see the suffering? and, however we may say, and find comfort in saying, that He proposes to overrule it, we can give no answer that goes to the bottom of the problem, and absolutely solves it. Do we, therefore, say that God is pleased to see His children suffer? The fact that He is Love forbids. Hence, we say, We cannot answer, — and are content to trust where we cannot see. So with numerous other questions — unanswerable except by impeaching God's character. We say, Any such answer in effect destroys God, and, being thus a self-evident contradiction, becomes, of course, excluded from the case. And this is what we are bound to say concerning the question before us, even granting that it transcends *our* reply except on the hypothesis named. It is to be held as a fundamental principle that no answer to it can be entertained which, so much as by the remotest implication, impinges on God's essential and irrepressible antagonism to sin, or authorizes us to think it something concerning which any other feeling than loathing and abhorrence is, under any circumstances, or in any sense, possible in Him, or allowable in us. If there be any meaning in the Bible, if any reality in Christ, if any significance in our own moral instincts, if any holiness or truth in God, sin is an evil — in itself, wholly so, an abomination in God's sight, and that should be an abomination in ours, — our curse now and always, the enemy of God and all good. There are no moral facts, if these are not among them; and if they are facts at all, they are facts to which too much emphasis cannot be given. There is no danger that we shall think too seriously of sin, or regard it as more monstrous, or appalling, than it is, if we but remember that God is God, and has told us that it must cease. The danger, as has been intimated, is altogether in the other direction; and for the honor of God and our own moral safety we cannot too scrupulously, or too constantly, watch against it.

To the convictions thus set forth as to the nature and tendency of the hypotheses thus passed in review, it is

believed, a large majority of our Church has substantially arrived. Differences of statement — possibly differences of conception on some points — there may be; but, in principle and general conclusion, we are fundamentally one. We are agreed in affirming the wrong of sin, and the need of repentance. We stand together on Paul's axiom that sin is 'exceeding sinful.' We unite in saying that, if the doctrine that God is the author of sin, or that He is satisfied with it, or that it is, in His sight, — or may be in ours, — a thing of small moment, were Universalism, we could not be Universalists; and that, if Universalism required or authorized anybody to believe and enforce any one of these predicates, we should be compelled to denounce and oppose it as a most pernicious error. We declare, at every opportunity, that we have no sympathy with any theology which implicates God in sin, and no faith in any philosophy of life which represents it as a seeming evil, but an actual good. We hold sin to be wrong, absolutely, unchangeably. It not only *seems* wrong, we aver; it *is* wrong, — wrong not only in man's sight, but even more in God's sight; a violation of principles of rectitude ingrained in the nature of things, and, so long as it lasts, a canker in souls, and a blot upon the otherwise fair face of the universe.

Having, then, reached these convictions, should we not vigorously — more vigorously than ever before — enforce them? If, as we have been circumstanced, in the ardor of our polemics, our attention has — almost unavoidably — been to some extent diverted from them, should we not more assiduously consider how Christ and the apostles dealt with this subject, and, following them as our models, henceforth not only affirm — as we always have affirmed — that sin will surely be punished, but proclaim its reality and heinousness; seek to arouse men to a sense of guilt because of it; call them to repentance; and aim to have them 'pricked in heart,' and moved to prostrate themselves before God, crying, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner'? In a word, should not these convictions more positively and vitally appear in our talk, our appeals, and all our methods of labor? Who, indeed, should deal plainly, closely, pungently, with this subject, if not we? The enormity of an

offence being always proportionate to the light and the love against which it is committed, to whom, of all Christians, should sin be so sinful and obnoxious as to us? or whose denunciations of it should be so severe? or whose sense of condemnation on account of it should be so poignant and overwhelming? For who show a Love against which it rebels, or from which it departs, or to which it is callously insensible, so vast, so tender, so all-embracing, as we? And, on the other hand, who have sanctions so certain and impressive, or motives so potent, as ours, by which to send home to souls the fact that not only is sin — any sin, all sin — a grievous offence against God, but that it is, and must be, a sure element of darkness, death and woe? Others talk of the pleasures of sin; we, never. Others believe that it may be committed with impunity; we pronounce this impossible. Sin, our message is, is not only a trampling of the commands of a loving Father, but a trifling with all the interests of the moral universe. An offence against God, it is also death and hell to every soul who serves it. Why, then, should we not commit ourselves to the New Departure which alike the letter and spirit of our faith thus demand, emphasizing beyond all others the enormity of sin, and the guilt of those who yield themselves to it, as these things are pressed upon us, — so rendering it henceforth impossible that we shall, in any quarter, be charged with belittling sin, as, with apostolic unction and zeal, we hold it up in the light of Divine realities, summoning to repentance and newness of life?

The glory of Universalism is in the harmony of God's sovereignty and man's accountability, and in the distinctness with which, pointing to the cross of Christ, it proclaims the wrong of sin, and the certainty of God's triumph over it. Be it ours, while abating nothing from the distinctness with which we prophesy this latter fact, to give new stress and power to the former. There is much of good in the world for us to thank God for; but there is much also of evil for us to mourn over and labor against. As in the Apostle's time, despite all that Christianity has accomplished in the enlightenment and salvation of souls, and the creation of a new and higher civilization, it is still true, alas! that

"the whole world lieth in wickedness." This state of things it is ours, if we have any part or lot with Christ, to help to remedy. As a Church, we have no other final purpose. But how is it to be remedied? By no gentle dalliance with iniquity; by no rose-colored optimism; by no loose theories about moral distinctions, or the nature of moral obligation; by no exaggeration of God's sovereignty, or one-sided talk about His love. It can be remedied only as the truth, the whole truth, is preached, with all its sanctions, in its due relations and its Divine proportions; only as, while men are told that God is sovereign, and are pointed to His boundless, pleading, patient, inextinguishable love, they are pressed also with their own responsibility and obligations, and are thus awakened to see, and, in the quick of their being, to feel, what a thing demanding confession and humiliation, and therefore demanding penitence and self-renunciation, sin is. Only thus can any effectual warfare against the wrong of the world be accomplished, or anything be done to lead souls home to God through the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Shall we heed the lesson, and give ourselves earnestly to the New Departure to which we are thus called?

CHAPTER VII.

SALVATION.

We need no New Departure as to the fact or extent of salvation; but do we not need one in the way of a more direct and personal enforcement of its nature and terms?

It was related, several years since, of a Belgian nobleman, condemned to death for murder, that as the officers, who had come to prepare him for execution, were about to leave him, one of them said, "You have now nothing to think of but the welfare of your soul,"—and that he replied, "O, *that* is the priest's affair." He was a Catholic, and was thus an example of what Catholic education can do in emptying one of personal concern as to his spiritual welfare. But does he not also strikingly illustrate a form of thought in respect to this subject quite too common among people of all sects, and of no sect, throughout Christendom, and among many who call themselves Universalists as well as others?

I remember to have once read a communication in one of our papers, in which the writer indignantly complained that, as a member of a choir, he had, not long before, been required to sing,

> "A charge to keep, I have,
> A God to glorify, —
> A never-dying soul to save,
> And fit it for the sky;"

and so incensed was he, he declared, at the abhorrent sentiment, especially of the last two lines, that he refused to sing the words. To the same effect, preaching on exchange, some years ago, from the text, "What must I do to be saved?" and trying to press home the question as one which we all have as much occasion as the jailer to ask, I so shocked a good woman of the congregation that she ran

in alarm to her (supplying) minister, urging him to preach at once from the same text, to counteract my heresy, and expressing her fear that I was 'going over to the orthodox'! And the minister, — an eminent one, — sharing in her condemnation of the heresy, preached as requested, and showed, no doubt to the general satisfaction, that the jailer's question had no religious bearing, and that, though we should be concerned in appropriating the blessings of the Gospel in this world, it is taking God's business out of His hands to ask any such question about our future salvation.

These instances — and many similar ones might be given, were it necessary — were not recent; but do they not very significantly indicate the quality of much of the thought which has been current among us, and which is still to be somewhat found? The misapprehension is not the same as the Belgian Catholic's; but is it not nearly akin to it, only substituting God for the priest? This is the idea, — that God has so 'fixed' things in Christ that our salvation hereafter is their 'affair,' not ours at all; and that, while we may properly be anxious to live a good life here, we have no concern as to what is beyond, since it is certain that God and Christ have us so in charge that we have only to die to find ourselves, whether we have lived a good life or a bad one, safely in heaven. Our 'evangelical' friends must not think to use this statement against us, for, though it lies somewhat differently in minds accepting their doctrines, this same essential idea that our future immortal salvation is primarily God's 'affair,' is found nowhere more common, and scarcely anywhere in more mischievous forms, than, in one shape or another, among them. In fact, as it exists among us, though formally put in another way, it is only a part of the undesirable inheritance we have derived from them. Happily, in our case, as has heretofore been stated, the doctrine in which this idea as found among us had its origin is not now prevalent as formerly; and yet — so do mischievous notions survive in effect long after they in form are dead — it is to be feared that, despite our improved theory as to the relations of character here to condition hereafter, our popular denominational thought is

largely pervaded and vitiated by the old leaven, first, of 'orthodoxy,' as to what salvation is, and then, of that stage of our doctrinal development which put all souls at once into heaven at death, as to why salvation is none of our 'affair.'

Under these circumstances, we need a thorough review of the whole ground, and thus need to have a New Departure in a general and systematic presentation of this grand Gospel theme of salvation, such as not a few have always been accustomed to give, which will put our whole Church more distinctly upon the true basis, and thus secure the direct and personal enforcement of the conditions of salvation which meets us everywhere in the Bible. For, consider, where can we read any treatment of this topic in the Bible, and not find ourselves pressed with what *we* have to do, as well as encouraged by what God has done and will do? Well would it be for us all could this fact be understood in all its bearings and admonitions. I know of nothing, indeed, doctrinally, for which the whole Christian world is more suffering to-day than for an accurate conception of this subject as the Bible presents it, and especially as it lay in the thought of our Lord; and for ourselves, I am satisfied there is scarcely another truth of the Gospel a clear understanding of which, in all its relations, would do so much for us in clarifying the whole current of our opinions, and in securing that wiser and more effective appreciation of motive and obligation which is our great lack.

What *is* salvation? Much would be done to simplify the subject, and to send it home with fresh power to consciences and hearts, if a proper understanding of the answer to this question could but be secured. Words falsely defined confuse thought, by suggesting meanings or distinctions which have no existence in fact. The creeds have long made salvation, not at all an inward process, but an external rescue, and a happy admission into heaven; and so ingrained has this idea become in the popular thought, determining and perverting every conception in the case, that, as Dr. Ballou once said, in substance, though they "have decidedly rejected it in its naked form, it enters more or less into the habitual impressions of Universalists themselves, so as to affect their

language and their forms of argument." But the Bible nowhere indicates, or warrants any such idea. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people *from their sins.*" This epitomizes the invariable burden of the Bible on this point. And to be saved from sin is — what but to be helped to be good? And wishing to be good — how, anywhere, are we to reach this result? How, under God, but by personal resolve and effort? What, then, have we but the whole doctrine of salvation through Christ, as to substance and method, summed up in these few words — showing that salvation is a deliverance from ignorance and sin, in a growing goodness, attained through our own personal resolve and effort, in an acceptance of Christ's help, under God's blessing? And could this but be once generally perceived and felt, would any further misconception as to whose 'affair' salvation is be possible? or should we be likely to see so much indifference and neglect concerning it?

God is over all in respect to our salvation, it is true, and as "His unspeakable gift," Christ is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." This the whole New Testament teaches. But are we anywhere independent of God? Is He not in a like sense over all in every department of our interests, and wherever blessings of whatever sort are possible to us, does He not graciously bestow the help and opportunity in the improvement of which we are to attain them? In no single instance, however, are we absolved from the necessity of accepting the help and improving the opportunity, if the blessing is to be enjoyed. *Personal effort,* indeed, co-operating with God in the use of the means He has bestowed, is not this, look where we will, the one cardinal and inexorable condition of all real attainment and success? In intellectual pursuits, in secular prosperities, who expects to be anything, or to accomplish anything, save as he himself works for it? And holding in respect to everything else, is it reasonable to suppose that this law is suspended only in respect to moral interests and spiritual possessions — the most precious of all? Nay, by the very necessities of the case, must it not hold even more rigorously as the price of these? Even more rigorously, I say: for one may come into wealth, or eminent

social or political position, and so attain to what passes for success by inheritance, or through favoring circumstances. But who can inherit goodness — as a positive quality? Or, however propitious circumstances may be, who ever was made, or can be made, spiritually wise and consecrate by them, except as he or she has willed and wrought, or does will and work, to become so? There is, indeed, a kind of negative goodness, the result of a happily balanced temperament and the absence of any occasion of evil — as a vegetable stalk stands erect because nothing has touched it to bend it, or as a brook runs a certain undeviating course because its banks enclose it, and nothing interposes to divert it. But such goodness has no absolute moral worth; is only the innocence of a child, not the tried virtue, or the rugged, resolute rightness of a man. This positive goodness must be acquired — often through wrestling, resistance, and hard-earned victory, — always as the fruit, under God, of our own purpose and exertion. Nobody can make me thus good — with becoming reverence, is it too much to say that, unless by annulling all the laws of my moral nature, and dealing with me as a thing, and not as a soul, God himself cannot make me thus good? — except as I am myself moved to desire and labor to become so.

And this is no temporary appointment, we have reason to believe. The Bible and all that belongs to the case indicate that it is a perpetual law, because inherent in the very constitution of the human soul and the methods of influence God has ordained for it. It is not a thing of time, or place, therefore. Holding here, it holds with equal inflexibility wherever the soul as a soul may go, in whatever states or stages of its being. Live where, or as long as, or under whatever circumstances the soul may, the continuity of its life is simply the continuity of its consciousness and its powers, and the instant and constant assertion of the same essential spiritual laws. Destroy this consciousness, impair these powers, or suspend these laws, and the reality and identity of its life are so far suspended or destroyed. Hence, wherever they may be, so long as souls remain the same moral entities and agents, they must not only carry the same moral consciousness and retain the same moral

powers, but must be subject to substantially the same spiritual laws.

What, then, follows? Identical as our growing goodness and our salvation are, salvation can pertain no more to the future immortal world than goodness, and is, therefore, to be reached, there or anywhere, only on the same conditions. We are saved here just in the same way, and just so far, as through the help and uplifting power of Christ, we become good here; and hereafter, we can be saved in no other way and to no other extent. Salvation there, therefore, is dependent on our own faith and choice, on our own effort and self-surrender, precisely as, and for the same reason that, our growth in virtue and Christian character is dependent on these conditions here. *Salvation anywhere is possible only as goodness is possible.*

The conclusion is apparent. If salvation, either here or hereafter, seems to us a thing to be at all desired, we are to understand that it is, under God, our concern exactly in the same sense as any advance in knowledge, or goodness, or as any attainment of desirable qualities or possessions, is our concern, and is to be realized only as we pay the exacted price of choosing and working for it. Sin being the voluntary surrender of ourselves to motives and purposes alien to God and good, salvation must, necessarily, be our equally voluntary election of better motives and purposes. In other words, if we are to be directly and personally benefited by Christ as our Saviour anywhere, not only is there something for us to believe, but something for us to do; not only something to be done for us, but something to be done by us. Christianity, that is to say, is no moral 'labor-saving machine.' It opens no free bridge, it places us on no royal road to heaven; and God's plan of redemption in Christ is no contrivance to get us saved, passively, — only a means whereby, co-operating with God, under the lead of Christ, we may save ourselves.

How but in this form does the Bible invariably present the subject? Its word in reference to this world is, "If any will not work, neither shall he eat;" and it has just as little indulgence for indolence in respect to the bread of everlasting life. It says to us in our secular and business rela-

tions, "Work with your own hands: . . . that ye may walk honestly, . . . and have lack of nothing;" and even when most positively certifying us of the time when, "at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, . . . and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," it says to us with still more emphasis in our spiritual relations, "*Wherefore*, . . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," — or with anxiety and self-distrust (Conybeare and Howson). And this is the manner in which this side of the subject is always presented. Thus, in the Old Testament, the summons is, "*Seek ye the Lord* while He may be found, *call ye upon Him* while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, *and let him return unto the Lord*, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon:" — and this, too, in connection with the most positive assurance that God's purpose of grace shall, beyond all peradventure, be accomplished. And in the New Testament, the word is, "I am the door; by me, *if any man enter in*, he shall be saved." "*Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord* shall be saved." Christ, we are told, "became the author of eternal salvation unto all *them that obey him*," and "is able to save them to the uttermost *that come unto God by him*." The Bible knows nothing of any salvation through Christ that is not dependent on these and like conditions.

And these are conditions, let it be noted, that imply much more than saying, I believe in Christ, — or, I am sorry, — or, O God, help me; and therefore forbid any theory of salvation which warrants a man in thinking that he can, all his days, live a life of godlessness and crime, and then, through some technical formula, 'swing from the gallows into glory,' as the Methodist divine, Rev. Dr. Abel Stevens, once expressed it, or on his death-bed, suddenly call a minister, and through his shriving, find himself in a few minutes in heaven. The conditions specified imply not simply a momentary penitence, but an entire revolution in the soul; a change not only in the direction, but in the whole quality and substance of life. It is not barely a crisis that they demand, but a regenerative process, purifying and uplifting

the whole man in a christianized and sanctified character. Goodness *is* character of the right sort. Hence only by faith, penitence, resolve, effort, taking hold of Christ, and becoming transmuted into whitened and holy character, thus attuning the soul with God, can these conditions of salvation be fulfilled, or can a soul find itself really redeemed. But all this is the work of time. Sudden, even instantaneous changes there may be, and frequently are, in thought, aim, purpose. Living heedlessly or badly, one may be suddenly arrested and resolve upon a better life. And forgiveness, acceptance there is for the prodigal, however much a prodigal he may have been, in proportion as he renounces his past and rises into something better. But salvation, as a completed state of the soul, ending in what the Bible calls heaven, is a different thing, and is possible only as a completely renovated character is possible, wrought out through the help of Christ, by the soul's own struggles and effort, and taking form in a goodness that knows no taint of sin.

But this is salvation by works, perhaps it will be said, whereas the New Testament peremptorily declares that we are "saved by grace, not of works," and that "eternal life is the gift of God." Very true, the New Testament does so affirm; and a most encouraging and comforting sense of God's merciful thoughtfulness it gives us so to believe. But in the words of Dr. Ballou, "so far as we have observed, every text which asserts that salvation is of grace, or not of works, speaks of it, at the same time, as experienced in this life, and effected by moral influences, — as, 'By grace *are* ye saved [that is, *already* saved], *through faith*;' so that, after all, it is the same salvation which is represented, in other passages, as attained by human agency." * Nobody supposes that salvation, so far as we here experience it in a growing holiness and spirituality, is something conferred upon us independent of our own faith or purpose. It is something we attain in the use of the means furnished.

* Universalist Expositor, 1840, pp. 45, 46. Should these pages fall into the hands of any who have not read this paper of Dr. Ballou, on The New Testament Doctrine of Salvation, let me urge them to procure and read it at the first opportunity.

Hence, evidently, it is to these means, and not to salvation as an end accomplished, that reference is made when it is said that salvation is of grace, and that eternal life is the gift of God. The means have been freely bestowed, and God is ever pleading with us to accept and use them; but they avail nothing except as they are used in compliance with the appointed conditions; nor, though they have been so freely given, can we hope for anything, either here or beyond, on account of them, only as we appropriate them, seeking to enter into life through them.

Reference was made, at the opening of this chapter, to those who expect salvation on the supposition that they have only to die to find themselves, without care or agency of theirs, happy in heaven — just as they came into this world, from their pre-natal state, through birth, or just as some kindly power might transfer them from a home of poverty, on one side of the street, to a splendid mansion on the other. But even granting the correctness of the theory of the Resurrection on which this expectation proceeds, how can the mere getting into a place called heaven consummate the spiritual change which salvation involves? Heaven is a place, no doubt, beautiful, glorious, beyond our conception. But will getting into the place make any one blessed, as one becomes warm by going into a heated room? Surely not. Holiness, harmony with God, is the essence of its felicity; and without this, though the place were ten thousand times more glorious, happiness would be impossible there. Really, then, heaven is a state of the soul, rather than a place in which the soul lives; and one entering the place, can find it heaven only as he carries in himself the fulfilled conditions of its blessedness. Concede, therefore, that the Resurrection is, as is so commonly supposed, simply our passing on into another realm of being, — our rising out of this mortal into an immortal life, what can it do towards putting into a soul these fulfilled conditions of blessedness? A soul cannot be emptied or stripped of its sin by any such change of place, as a bottle may be emptied of its contents, or a body be stripped of a garment in such a transit; nor can it be filled or clothed with holiness, as a jar may have some pure liquid poured into it, or a body be clad in a clean garment.

As Dr. Ballou has well said, "He knows little of our nature who imagines that faith and righteousness can be communicated to the mind, without any agency on our part, as water may be poured into a vessel or passive receiver; for faith and righteousness are themselves but *exercises* of the understanding and affections. They are the results of active thought and feeling." Sin or holiness is a state of the affections; a condition or posture of the mind and heart. Change places, change worlds even, though we do, *we* are not changed save as our affections, our minds and hearts are changed. Go where we may, therefore, we cannot pass out of the necessity of our own right will and effort, and so of our own moral activity, as the one irremissible price of salvation, for the reason that we are moral beings, and that salvation concerns us — not as a mechanical work, as if we were things, but as a moral process, "implying the exercise of conscience and free-will," in the recognition of the fact that we are souls. Whatever may be true, then, as to the manner in which we might be dealt with if we were things, there clearly can be no *moral* action, or result, except as our moral faculties move and concur to produce it; and were it possible for us to be saved through the Resurrection, without this, we should be saved as *things*, not as *souls*.

As has been said on one of our earlier pages, no one can tell what is to be the effect of the soul's emancipation from the body into the new circumstances of the Immortal Life. No theory of salvation is complete, or scriptural, that does not duly take into account all the possibilities of this emancipation, and of the soul's new surroundings in consequence. But do new circumstances and associations here, of themselves, transform us? Transport one who has lived a low and sensual life from all such associations into the best and most spiritually electric companionships, and do you thereby make him moral and religious? Such a change of circumstances is favorable to a better life, *if* one will accept what they give, and choose and will as they suggest. Not otherwise. They have no necessary or instantaneous transforming power. And if not here, why hereafter, even though the body is thrown aside, since character is not of the body, but of the soul? Admit all that can be properly

claimed as to the helpful tendency of such changed circumstances towards a corresponding change of character, still this much we know by virtue of our nature as moral beings — that as one here transferred from vicious to virtuous associations, must himself choose and work towards goodness, if he is to become really good, so a similar exercise of our moral faculties must always be necessary, wherever we may be, if we are to reach any actual attainment in personal holiness. Hereafter as certainly as here, therefore, salvation is possible to any soul only as, in such an exercise of its own powers, it believes, repents, and, clasping Christ, says, Lord, thou art mine; help me to be wholly thine, — working meantime to climb upward and be like him.

And this, there are those of us who think, as we read the New Testament, is what is signified by the Resurrection: not the mere passage of the soul forward into another sphere of being, but its gradual regeneration; its rising out of selfishness into all large and holy affections, out of all impiety and impurity and earthliness into the image of Christ, and therefore into harmony and communion with God; as Paul puts it, its deliverance "from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." If this be so, then we have something to do in the very process of the Resurrection. And what but this does the Apostle mean (Phil. iii. 10, 11), when, describing his spiritual struggles, he says, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made comformable unto his death, *if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead*"?

At all events, not to make a point of this, whatever the Resurrection, it cannot relieve us from the necessity of caring for our salvation as our personal concern — as the Bible everywhere assures us it is. The bowing of the knee to Christ, and the confession of him as Lord, not in word only, but in the surrender of our whole being to his authority, and in the taking on of his image, are the New Testament symbols of our redemption. This is a personal, and must be a willing, bowing and confession; and so long as these, or the faith and effort, the consecration and resolve thus signified, are postponed, be we where we may, our salvation

will be postponed — be postponed until, of our own will, in response to the pleadings of God's grace, and in the use of Christ's help, we seek and find it. And we are Universalists, the most of us, only because we see a time when the most unbelieving will be awakened to faith, and the most obdurate be melted into contrition, and those most utterly lost and dead in the decay of will and spiritual faculty be quickened to call on God and resolve towards home, and when, therefore, all will be saved because all, through Christ as the Way, have sought and found the salvation God has provided for them.

To the general view thus presented, we are, as a Church, undeniably committed. It is our denominational position, so far as the pronounced convictions of the great majority of our ministers and most thoughtful people can determine this position. Shall we not, then, by common consent, have a New Departure as to our way of putting the subject, so that while God and Christ and their work shall be fully recognized, salvation shall henceforth be urged by us — not as their concern exclusively, but as ours, — a result finally dependent, under God, solely upon ourselves and our own resolve and endeavor? And shall not our summons, with great ardor and strenuousness, be, O souls that would be saved, see what you have at stake, and be up and doing? Was it not so that Christ preached? Was it not so that the Apostles preached? Is it not thus that Christianity constantly addresses a world estranged from God, and needing to be spiritually vitalized and reconciled to Him? How else have the indifferent ever been aroused, or the thoughtless stirred to attention, or the sinful awakened to penitence and amended living? Or, how else can we expect to become an awakening power to torpid, unbelieving, sin-cankered souls, or to see among us that sense of personal concern and that increased religious earnestness which we so much need? *Men give little attention to that in respect to which they feel that they have nothing to do.* If, therefore, we would be a life-giving power in the world, and see those to whom our message comes really moved with respect to spiritual things, inquiring with kindled hearts concerning

their own salvation, and interested in furthering the salvation of others, we must be rid of the idea that salvation is, in any sense, a thing with which we have nothing to do, and, with something of prophetic and apostolic unction, first of all applying the words to ourselves, must take up the old cries, "Cast away from you all your transgressions, and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die?" and, "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God."

This idea that our salvation anywhere is God's 'affair,' and not our pressing personal concern, *has* wrought us great harm; it will not cease to be a leaven of harm, so long as it at all survives among us. "*What must I do to be saved?*" we should hereafter cause it to be understood, is a question which we have, every one of us, occasion to ask with profound solicitude. Not, What shall I do to insure rescue from the wrath of God, and perdition in hell? — as one is rescued from deserved hanging, or from drowning; but, What shall I do to be saved from sin and its darkness and absence from God? What shall I do to become pure, unselfish, Christ-like, thoroughly good, — superior to temptation, and growing in freedom from sin? This is the grand question — not particularly with reference to the present, not particularly with reference to the future; but with reference to the everlasting Now in which we are always living, and always shall live, and because holiness alone is life, and any lack of harmony with God is spiritual poverty, death and woe. Only as we ask this question and act upon the sense of personal concern which it expresses, can we become Christians here, or find our way among the redeemed hereafter; and only as we awaken others thus to ask and act, are we following in the steps of Christ and the Apostles, or beginning to do *the* work of a Christian Church.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONVERSION.

THEORETICALLY, the Bible doctrine of Conversion has no more strenuous advocates than Universalists. No faith in what is called 'miraculous conversion' is pretended, for the reason that we have no faith in the doctrine of Human Depravity from which it logically comes. Nor does the Bible authorize any such theory of conversion. Were we to judge from the manner in which the subject is commonly urged, indeed, it would be supposed — as many do suppose — that the Scriptures are full of the doctrine of conversion as a supernatural process, enforced by some word having a single fixed meaning, standing for just this and nothing else — as it ought to be, if the traditional teaching as to its nature were correct, since, on this theory, there is nothing in the universe analogous to it. But the fact is quite otherwise. Not only is conversion, as enjoined in the Bible, as simple and as easy to be understood as any other change of purpose, but the word is used "in all manner of connections, for all sorts of purposes and with the utmost freedom; is just as common a word as turning, or going. It signifies simply, to turn from one state or condition to another, and is used of one who turns *from* duty as well as of one who turns *to* it, having just as many uses as the word *turn*, physical, moral, secular, religious." When it is said, "Let your laughter be *turned* to mourning," precisely the same word is used as when our Lord says to Peter, "When thou art *converted*, strengthen thy brethren." When it is recorded that "Jesus *turned him about* in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?" the same word is used as when we read, "He which *converteth* the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death," and as when our Lord says, "Except ye *be converted*, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Nor is this all. As a verb, the word is always put by our translators in the passive form, implying that the thing is done *to*, or *for*, and not *by* us. Thus we read, "And sinners shall *be converted* unto thee," — and of the Jews, that they had closed their eyes, "lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and *be converted*," and in the passage above cited, "Except ye *be converted*, and become as little children." But the original, those who have studied the subject assure us, gives no warrant for this, and one writer * says that he does "not recall an instance where the verb in the original has this passive form." Instead, therefore, of the statement, "And sinners shall *be converted* unto thee," we should read, "And sinners shall *turn*, or *return*, unto thee;" and instead of, "Repent ye, therefore, and *be converted*," we should read, "Repent and *turn*, or *return*." When the translators give us the word *turn* instead of *convert*, they put it in this active form, implying that the action is on our part, as when we read that "a great number believed and *turned* — or as the expression is made elsewhere, *were converted* — unto the Lord."

What, then, is the conclusion, these things being so? This, clearly, — that, as one turns his body from one attitude to another, or, if away from home, may return to it, — as one, even, who is going the right way, may turn about and pursue the wrong, so, in the same sense of simple turning, involving nothing more strange or supernatural, and implying a precisely similar exercise of one's choice, conversion is the turning of a soul from a state of unbelief, or indifference, or worldiness, or sin, to a condition of faith and religious resolve and endeavor. It is something as purely voluntary on our part, — something as entirely depending on the personal exercise of our own faculties, and therefore as much within our own election and determination as the change of an idler into studiousness, — as the reform of one who resolves on abstinence instead of drunkenness, — or

* Rev. S. Judd, I think — in an excellent sermon, from which my notes had made the quotation in the preceding paragraph. I have looked for the sermon in vain. I wished to verify my impression as to the author, and to make other extracts, — possibly to give further credit.

as is anything else of which we are accustomed to say that it is wholly at our option. God has furnished the means, in all that He has taught us, and especially in all that He has given us in His Son; and amidst these instructions, appeals and awakening agencies, supplemented always by the strivings and pleadings of God's Holy Spirit, as Christ says, "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," it is for us to say whether we will turn or not, and when we will turn, and how far we will turn, and therefore to what extent we will be converted, or will convert ourselves, and enter upon a new and nobler life.

The single idea of conversion, it thus appears, is that it is a quickening of the soul to spiritual consciousness and activity; an awakening to a sense of our relations, interests and obligations, in consequence of which we resolutely set ourselves God-ward, — turning, according to our particular state and needs, from a life somehow below what we should live, to the life which God and our own welfare demand. Hence, naturally, "Wash you; make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well," is the manner in which it is enforced in the Old Testament; and the New Testament, in different words, enjoins precisely the same thing. This is illustrated in the words of our Lord just now mentioned, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." The disciples had been ambitiously disputing who should be greatest in the kingdom. Thereupon the Master placed a little child before them, telling them that, unless they renounced all such selfish ambition, and *returned* to the simplicity and guilelessness of their childhood, they could not even enter into his kingdom, much less be greatest in it. His words, no doubt, had a special application to them; but they very distinctly set forth the radical idea of conversion, in its Bible sense. Though one who has battled with temptation, and who is pure through conflict and victory, has qualities which cannot pertain to the untried innocence of a little child, childhood is, nevertheless, a fitting type of that simple, docile, loving state of mind and heart becoming the Christian disci-

ple. As children, our hearts had not become hardened or cold. We were not sordid, worldly, or artificial. Our affections were uppermost in us, and were tender and true. And to this state, so far as we have fallen from it, Christ teaches us, in his doctrine of conversion, we must *return* as men and women, if we would be members of his spiritual family, subjects and citizens in the kingdom of God.

But our Lord's most impressive illustration of the true doctrine of conversion is given us, perhaps, in the parable of the prodigal son. In his self-sufficiency, the prodigal had gone away from his father, and from all the privileges and plenty of his father's house, forgetting alike his duty and his interests as a son. But at last, in "a far country, he came to himself." How much there is in these four words expressive of the insensibility and moral unconsciousness of a soul away from God, and lost to all sense of obligation to Him, — "he came to himself"! Famishing, he began to think. Conscience and affection, so long benumbed, asserted themselves. Becoming self-conscious, his eyes were opened to see where and what he was, in painful contrast with what and where he should be. He thought of his father, and of the love which had sheltered and blessed him, but which he had so trampled and forgotten. He thought of his home and its abundance, while, the companion of swine, he was perishing with hunger. And what thereupon did he do? Did he wait for some magic influence outside himself to transform him into a loving and obedient son? Did he say, When 'tis time, my father will somehow make me penitent and dutiful, or some kindly power will take me home? No. He felt that the responsibility was with himself; that he had strayed, and squandered, and sinned; and that it was for him to repent, and to resolve and act towards amendment. So he said, "*I will arise, and go to my father.*" "And he arose, and came to his father." *That* was his conversion, his *turning back*, his *return* to his duty and its joy. Nor, as we see him restored to the dear old home, clasped, forgiven, in his father's arms, and rich once more in all the bounties of his father's house, have we occasion to look for anything beyond this simple resolve, "*I will arise, and go to my father,*" and the

rising and going which followed, to explain how and why he is a converted man.

In this work of conversion, there may be a violent and remorseful experience, a marked crisis, when one is aware of being brought to a stand, and of being born out of the lower into the higher life, or not, according to one's moral temperament, or the nature of the antecedent life. If the life has been godless, vicious, unprincipled, such a crisis is inevitable; and the hour of spiritual awakening, of reflection, self-condemnation, repentance and resolve, such as is represented in the prodigal's case, and through which only can one who has so lived pass out of the bad into the good, or into an attempt towards the good, *is* this crisis. But if one has been living an upright life, animated by honorable and conscientious motives, only has not been religiously awakened, — has not been affected by the thought of God's love, and by the power of Christ's cross, and so has not been moved to prayer and a determined self-dedication to God, — then there is no occasion for any such violent crisis. The thing needed is a profound and thorough awakening of the heart — a subduing sense of the sinfulness of all withholding of one's self from the love of God and the religious life, in a consciousness of direct and personal obligation. One may say, At such a time, pointing to place and date, I was aroused to reflection, penitence and religious concern, and resolved, God helping me, to turn directly about, and give myself to a life of prayer, and spiritual culture, and Christian endeavor. Another may say, As I compare my feelings and the present tone and aims of my life with what they were one year, or five, or ten years ago, I am sensible that a marked change has taken place in me; but it has been so gradual, and, amidst the influences by which I have been surrounded, I have been led so imperceptibly and almost unconsciously to be more thoughtful, prayerful, and religiously dutiful, that really I cannot fix any time when the change occurred. And still another may say, I do not remember when I did not love God and pray to Him, or when the thought of Him was not precious to me, or when I was without the resolve to try to serve and enjoy Him. But such differences as to *how* or *when* are of no importance.

The vital question is, Is the man or woman pure, devout, religiously consecrated? Is he or she like a little child, in the sense Christ intended, loving God, loving the Saviour, and making it a constant thought and effort to *be* good and to *do* good in a religious spirit? If so, then no matter about the *how*, the *when*, or the *where*. If one was never other than such a person, then conversion was not needed, — only persistence and growth, as one going right does not need to turn, only to press forward. If one has been different, and is now thoughtful, reverent, unselfish, godly, then this transition, whether sudden or gradual, — whether so marked in the book of experience and memory that time and place can be exactly named, or otherwise, — is the conversion required.

And this being, as we believe, the Bible doctrine of conversion, it is for this reason the doctrine on which, *theoretically*, we insist — insist with great pertinacity whenever it is attacked, or we hear the necessity of 'a miraculous change of heart' asserted. But how is it with us *practically?* Are we, in our labors, systematically aiming at the conversion of the unawakened, as really the thing of primary and commanding importance we theoretically allege it to be? Are we anxiously training our children, in our homes and Sunday-schools, and directing and toning our own lives, and doing all we do with eager and engrossing concern towards this end, counting all other success as no success except as *this* is realized? Of not a few, these inquiries can be answered in the affirmative; but can they be so answered to any such extent as the conditions of our spiritual vitality and power as a Church undeniably require? Who will venture to say that they can be? And if they cannot be, conceding that there is any reality in what the New Testament teaches on this point, and what we, theoretically, so contend for as the truth, is it not entitled to a larger and more prominent place in our thought and *life*, and are we not summoned, in a more urgent and personal administration of the Gospel call, "*Repent ye, therefore, and turn*" *to God*, to make a New Departure in this regard? What but this, in fact, should be the end of our labors?

Is there any doubt what was *the* end for which Christ and

the Apostles labored? Go to the New Testament, and see. Constantly, under one name or another — sometimes as Repentance, sometimes as Conversion, sometimes as the New Birth, or the birth from above, sometimes as simple Quickening, — this generic idea of spiritual awakening and return to God was the burden of our Lord's teachings; and as invariably his one word was, Only through this is there, or can there be, for any soul, anywhere, entrance into my kingdom. So with the Apostles. Wherever they went, "testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," their incessant message was, whatever other message they might bear, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins;" "Repent and be converted [turn, convert yourselves], that your sins may be blotted out." And, seeing thus what their ministry was, can we for a moment question what it would be, were they bodily on the earth to-day? The state of things to which they then addressed themselves was, in substance, not at all exceptional. Special circumstances and exposures were different; but essential facts and needs were the same as now. Just as much now as then, men are wandering from God, perishing in their absence from Him. Now, as then, spiritual things are forgotten, and flesh is absorbing soul. Sin is no whit less a curse now than it was then; error is no less a calamity; worldliness is no less a mistake and a wrong; souls are no less in peril. In no respect, on no account, did men then need to be aroused, stimulated, converted, more than this very hour. The same interests are at stake; the same motives appeal; the same necessities press; and as I take my New Testament, and follow our Lord and his chosen ones in their work, and then think of them as preaching among us to-day, I hear their voices ringing out the same rebuking, pleading, awakening message as of old. No doubt they would expose error. No doubt they would frame arguments, and set forth doctrine. No doubt they would carefully adjust themselves to existing conditions, intellectual and social, and appropriate for their purpose all that science discloses, all that philanthropy has achieved, all that our improved civilization sug-

gests. But underneath and above all, their one most importunate word everywhere would be, O souls immortal! O harassed, misguided, wandering ones! awake from your mammon-worship, your selfishness, your love of pleasure; awake from your engrossment in this world, your dull content amidst your social and political corruption, your sin; repent, turn, and give yourselves to God. How else could they do their work of spiritual quickening and regeneration? And if this would be their method of labor, and we, having their Gospel, have succeeded to their work, is it for us to content ourselves with mere criticisms and arguments, with moral homilies and pretty essays, with textual explanations and doctrinal enforcements, however able or eloquent? Are we in the line of duty if we do not take up the message that would so certainly be theirs, and make it with equal emphasis ours? How else are we to prove ourselves Christ's followers, or to fulfil at all the ends for which he came, or the errand with which, in his behalf, we are charged?

For the sake of others, we need to make this New Departure. The spiritual interests of all Christendom are seriously suffering for the theory of conversion which we represent, *duly put to use.* The disastrous results of the traditional doctrine can scarcely be exaggerated. Let us gladly admit all that can justly be said in its favor. Admit the high character and spiritual earnestness of many of those who think themselves examples of the supernatural renewal, the necessity of which it affirms. Admit that by means of revivals and excitements, engineered on the assumption of periodical visitations by the Holy Spirit to work this renewal, considerable numbers are, from time to time, religiously awakened, so that the churches of the several 'evangelical' sects, thus recruited, are, as the rule, much larger than ours, or any others organized on a like basis. But all this, alas! is only one side — and a very small side — of the case. It is as nothing compared with the record for evil which the received theory has made, and is making, against itself.

Think of the mischievous effect of the reliance on revivals and special occasions thus encouraged, as illustrated in

the statement of Catharine Beecher, "that when revivals came, it was [thought] best to read the Bible, and pray, and go to meeting, but that, at other times, it was [held to be] of little use."

Think of those naturally devout and thoughtful, anxious to 'be converted,' but hopelessly perplexed, baffled, thrown back upon themselves, confounded and disheartened in all their religious endeavors. So, Miss Beecher tells us, it was with her. Desiring nothing so much as 'to become a Christian,' and yet assured that it was her 'obstinate unwillingness to do what was required' that stood in the way, she at length, in her fruitless wrestlings and agony, reacted into 'an outburst of indignation and abhorrence,' disgusted with God and everything pertaining to religion, as she had been taught concerning them. And she only represents an innumerable company of others. An intelligent friend, reared in 'orthodoxy,' said to me not long since, None but one educated in these ideas can begin to understand the confusion and wretchedness they occasion those at all sensitive and religiously disposed. Those who care nothing about religion get along well enough. But the more earnest and thoughtful people are, the more confounded and distressed they are likely to be, as, praying and struggling for the 'change of heart' supposed to be necessary, they fail to obtain it, and wonder why. It was so in my case, she continued. I was scarcely more than eleven years of age when I became deeply exercised in respect to conversion. I was told that God alone could give me 'a new heart,' and, at the same time, that I must obtain it myself. So I prayed, and read, and agonized. I besought God to give me what I needed, and, if in anything I had failed to do my part, to show me what was required, and to help me do it. Still conversion did not come. At length, wearied and tortured, I became utterly discouraged, not knowing what I could further do, until finally I settled into a torpid and desperate state, in which the very mention of religion became offensive to me. I could not bear to be in any way even approached on the subject; and a dear old friend, my Sabbath-school superintendent, who used to call to talk with me, grew on this account to be so absolutely

disagreeable, that it painfully excited me to see him coming towards the house. This was my condition for years — years the anguish and darkness of which I shall never forget. And I am but one of many such sufferers. Vast numbers have thus had their hearts wrung and their lives shadowed, while others have been driven into defiance or despair.

And then, still further, showing quite another work of evil, think of the multitudes trained in this common doctrine of conversion, some of whom are more or less identified with Christian congregations, but most of whom are outside all religious associations, in whom, so far as such a result is possible, it has destroyed all sense of personal responsibility touching a religious life. Teaching that man is impotent for his own conversion, and that the whole work is God's, to move when, where and in whom He pleases, it has infected the entire popular mind — including many who in terms reject it — with the idea that those who are to become Christians are somehow, at some time, to be arrested and wrought upon by God's omnipotent Spirit, and thus at once, without agency of theirs, transformed into regenerate souls. Naturally, so taught, the great mass, whether inside or outside the circle of religious influence, are stolidly indifferent to all religious appeals, feeling that, when God pleases to make them good, they will become so, and that, in the mean time, the domain of religion is altogether a foreign country to them. How else should they feel, the theory in which they have been educated being true? It is only surprising that such teaching has not been more universally disastrous, and that the religious instinct and the sense of religious responsibility have been strong enough to assert themselves in spite of it even to the extent they have. For when people have been drilled into the belief that any effective purpose towards a holy life is possible only as God miraculously creates or imparts it, what is there for them, acting at all on the lesson, except to renounce all concern about such a life, and to feel that there is nothing for them to do but to devote themselves to this world as inclination may prompt, until God shall be pleased to take them in hand? Catharine Beecher, from whom I have already twice

quoted, and whose competency as a witness no one will dispute, giving her experience, testifies that this is the natural effect of the theory — to "lead to an entire neglect of all religious concerns." Is it too much to say, indeed, that this idea, directly or indirectly, lies at the bottom of nearly all the religious procrastination and unconcern which occasion us so much regret? In the words of a good man now departed, "The two notions of the Innate Corruption of Human Nature and of Miraculous Conversion are actually consuming the religious life — of New England," he said; but with broader truth, we may say, of the whole Christian world: "i. e., they are filling our families and houses of worship, our towns and cities, with those who think that they have no interest in religion, or the church, except in the contingency" of this supernatural 'change of heart,' and who, in consequence, are postponing all religious thought or action on the supposition that, by and by, religion will come to them, and God's work of grace be instantaneously done within them.

And yet once more, reflect on the spectacle presented on almost every gallows as murderers and criminals, hardened in their lives of sin, and without the remotest conception of the real work of religion in the heart, boastfully tell of the change which has come to them, and protest their assurance that they are to swing at once into glory! Such spectacles are an offence and a disgust to all thoughtful people, and burlesquing the sacred name of religion, are serving, as often as they occur, to bring it into contempt as a thing only of talk and shallow cant. But every such spectacle is the legitimate product of the common doctrine of conversion; and multitudes of the depraved and abandoned, so far as they ever think of God or the future, are expecting, on the authority of this doctrine, to get into heaven through just such an instantaneous change, which, as they imagine, will wipe out all their sins, unpunished, transform them into blood-washed saints, and put them safely at God's right hand.

These, then, being some of the deplorable results of the current theory, are we not, for the sake of all the interests thus affected for evil, urgently called to make our doctrine of conversion more vitally a power for the ends it is de-

signed to serve? There is nothing else that can supplant the common doctrine and correct its false impressions; and except as this *is* supplanted, it will go on begetting the same ruinous misconceptions, filling our communities with the same chronic irreligiousness, expecting God to make it religious, and sowing the same seed-tares that, these many generations, have borne such melancholy fruit, in lives knowing so little of God, and Christ, and spiritual sensibility, and so invincibly wedded to indifference and the world. The only remedy for the evils of error is the truth.

But we need, also and especially, to take this New Departure for our own sake — that we may fitly express and duly honor the faith we profess, and make our Church the living instrument of awakening and saving men which, as a Church of Christ, it ought to be. What, finally, does this Church of ours stand for? Immediately, it stands for many things: — for warfare against error, and for the exposition and defence of the truth; for God's Fatherhood; for man's brotherhood; for God's instant and constant moral rule in the life of souls and the life of the race; for the unescapable retributions of sin; and, sublime climax of all, for the everlasting unity of our race, and for Christ's certain ultimate triumph in bringing all souls home to God. Valiant and effective service, as has been said in preceding pages, has our Church done, standing for these things in the past; and not one of them is a thing to be overlooked or forgotten. Any New Departure that should propose to ignore or forget them, or any one of them, would be a departure for evil and not for good — a sacrifice of principle and a waste of power. But *why* does our Church stand for these things? For no mere purpose of theory or argument, of attack or defence, surely; but only because they are so many means for something beyond. Our Church, if indeed it be a Church of Christ, as we insist, stands finally for just what the Bible stands for; for just what the cross of Christ stands for; for just what God's loving and holy spirit is always pleading and striving for: — for the awakening of the indifferent; for the conversion of the sinful; for the salvation of the perishing; to put the light of a Divine life into dull and earth-bound eyes; and for anything else only as helps to these ends. And standing for

these ends, everything in our condition and in the condition of the church and the world is conspiring to summon us to give them the prominence they deserve. We have been doing one great work — that of doctrinally enlightening and leavening the church and the world. God is now calling us to another and greater — that of spiritually quickening souls, that the tides of a Diviner life may flow into them.

As was intimated at the close of our first chapter, the one imperious demand of this time — as, indeed, it has been of all former times, is religious sensibility ; a profounder consciousness of God ; spiritual arrest and guidance. The locomotive, shaking our towns and cities beneath the thunder of its wheels, and finding no wilderness too dense or inaccessible to be pierced with the shrill scream of its whistle, fitly symbolizes the material enterprise that is mastering the globe, making or stealing money, and pushing everywhere for 'more.' But the locomotive is only force, and without the controlling presence of mind, rushes to certain ruin. And so all these things that so signalize our time — our science, so bold and inquisitive, and much of it so godless, — our inventions, so fruitful, — our literature, so copious, — our trading, so eager, — our industries, so manifold, and some of them so titanic, — our material energy so many-sided, so restless, so unconquerable, are but so many expressions of another kind of force, which quite as much needs the controlling presence of religion, and can only result in moral collapse and decay without it. It is the sad but significant warning of history, that the periods most marked by the triumphs of art and intellect have been among the periods of most terrible social wreck and national overthrow. The question of engrossing concern to-day is, Is *this* period to repeat the warning ? Great reason have we to be thankful for its intellectual reach and conquests, and for its material scope and vigor. But yonder, so sure as God's throne stands, is the vortex into which we are to plunge if these be not possessed and sanctified. Science, behind all law, must see something more than law, and kneel. Business must be conscious of interests more real and enduring. Politics must be made clean. Industry must toil in reverent dependence on an unseen Hand. Literature must make

itself a minister to something deeper than taste or mere knowledge. All material energy must confess a spiritual control. In a word, God must be the central fact in life, or disaster and death will ensue. And the work of our Church, freighted with truths so broad, so rational, so satisfying alike to the intellect and the heart, is to put the thought of God as a living power, as no other Church can, into the life of this eager, restless, world-ridden time — so drifting away from the old faiths, and so needing anchorage and inspiration in what is better. But this, in its very nature, is a work of *religious* awakening and impulse, and can be done only as, making ourselves everywhere an incarnate call to repentance and consecration, we emphasize what Christ means by conversion as the sole gateway to the highest order of character, and seek to make every finger we point heavenward a conductor to bring down among us the electric life of God. We do nothing, we can do nothing towards the most vital administration of the Gospel, or towards answering the deepest needs of souls or the hour, except as we thus labor. "One of the things," said Ward Beecher, not long ago, in his second series of Lectures on Preaching, "that measure the power of the pulpit is the magnitude of living power it develops among the people." And for like reasons, *the* thing which finally determines the worth of a church to the world is the measure of spiritual power it puts into it. For this reason, conversion, as the New Testament enforces it, being the key to the whole process of Christian experience, — the cardinal fact in the Christian life, our usefulness depends finally upon our earnestness and fidelity at just this point, and the use we make of whatever else we believe or preach with reference to this end.

In the prominence they give to the necessity of conversion, notwithstanding they are so seriously mistaken in their conception of its nature, is one of the explanations of whatever religious effectiveness our brethren of other churches have. Their *errors* concerning it are the occasions of widespread harm, as we have seen; but we cannot deny that, despite their errors, they are doing something to arouse and religiously impress souls: and for whatever genuine Chris-

tian work they are doing, let us thank God. Have we not much to learn from them in this particular? Our *theory* of conversion is different from theirs; but no whit should we be behind them, on this account, in the constancy and earnestness with which we urge the thing itself. We should rather exceed them in these things: for who see in sin, in spiritual deadness and unconcern, in absence from God and unconsciousness of Him, things in themselves so terrible as we? Even so distinguished an expositor of 'orthodoxy' as Dr. Enoch Pond, in a late paper on the growing 'evangelical' "disposition to fraternize with Universalists," protests against it for the reason, that if the idea is relinquished that men are "all under sentence of eternal death and exposed to suffer forever for their sins," "the exigency which demanded the interposition and death of the Son of God" is "quite removed," and "no man can see why Christ should have died"! And this but illustrates the chronic blindness and insensibility of our 'evangelical' brethren to the intrinsic curse of sin. It is not *sin*, but *the punishment of sin* that seems to them the terrible thing, furnishing, as Dr. Pond avers, the sole reason why all heaven should be moved for human redemption. *We* see the terrible thing in sin itself, and are thus furnished with corresponding reason to plead with men to repent of and abandon it. And as to the means whereby souls are to be reached, awakened and turned to God, who, if we will but use them, have motives so potent, or can begin to do so much as we?

What we most want is reality and intensity of faith in the theories we talk, and the zeal born of such a faith. "You Universalists," said a Baptist minister at one of our General Convention Conference Meetings,* "have the grandest ideas; and if you were only true to them, you would sweep the world." And this is what we are here for — spiritually to master and possess the world. Do we actually believe in conversion as a requirement of the Gospel, or as a necessity for souls? If so, it is for us to show it by methods of labor, and an ardor, and an amount of results corresponding. "Hast thou faith?" said the Apostle, to the Romans; "have

* At Providence, R. I., 1858.

it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." And these are God's words to us as a Church, to-day. Our period of simple preparation is over. Our period for fruitage is here. Mere talk *about* conversion, and the glorious things that are to come of Christ's saving work through it, will no longer do. We must give evidence of the thing itself, and show ourselves practically in earnest to induce and promote it. The right kind of talk has its use, and argument, if really argument, seldom fails to make itself duly felt; but Christ was not born to modify opinions simply, nor merely to leaven the world with larger and freer thought, or with broader conceptions of God, or clearer conceptions of immortality. He was born to regenerate souls and change life; born 'that he might bear witness to the truth,' indeed, but only that those believing the truth might be sanctified through it; and if his kingdom is ever to triumph, it must triumph, not through doctrinal assent, or any amount of theoretical assertion, however strenuously or ably argued, but through the aggregation and earnest effort of souls converted to God, and quickened to newness of life in His service. On no other terms can we, to deepest or widest effect, compel the world's attention, command its respect, or make ourselves felt as a recreative spiritual force in it.

God be thanked for all that tells of the progress we have made — for the literature we have created; for the schools and colleges we have founded; for the splendid church edifices that are bearing our name; for every sign of our growth in numbers, wealth, and material strength; and God be thanked even more for all that is indicating what we have been as a leavening influence among the creeds, and in the thought of the country and the world. All these have their importance. But sinful souls awakened, the thoughtless becoming thoughtful and penitent, the prayerless becoming prayerful, the worldly and unbelieving moved to cry, "What must I do to be saved?" and setting themselves to do what is required — these are more than books, or schools, or beautiful or costly temples, — more even than changed opinions, or broader and better conceptions of religious truth, as signs of the true life, and as

means of Church-power. Other things are helps, steps towards the ends desired; — these are necessities, the ends themselves, without which no church can long fail to die out, or to be cut down, as the Lord of the vineyard asks, "Why cumbereth it the ground?"

On every principle of highest moral influence, and by virtue of every motive than can most affect hearts, we *should* be the people most electric with spiritual life, and the Church most effective in awakening and turning souls to God. Are we so in fact? Alas, can we say, Yes? How few of us, comparatively, are glowing with religious fervor, under the kindling baptism of the Holy Ghost! How many, failing to appreciate Universalism, are as yet content to be only servants and strangers, in the outer courts of the temple, instead of pressing on as sons and daughters into the innermost household of God!

Is it said that the proportion of such among us, all things considered, is not greater than among our 'evangelical' neighbors? Perhaps it is not; but this avails nothing for our excuse. There is no ground for comparison in this respect between us and them. *Their* theory of conversion, as we have seen, tends logically and necessarily to religious delay and unconcern, and every soul among them, awakened and striving towards the religious life, is so in spite of the hinderances and discouragements it interposes. *Our* theory, no less recognizing our dependence upon God and the agency of the Holy Spirit, tells us that it is for us, under God, to turn to Him, and, summoning us to the action required, presses us with the fact that, so long as we remain unawakened, we are ourselves at fault. How, then, can those professing to believe Universalism justify themselves to their own consciences in an unawakened, or non-religious life? Or, since in this same view we are shown how much the work of human conversion and amendment depends upon our efforts to promote it, how can they feel otherwise than constantly self-condemned if they fail to be earnest and active in their endeavors, according to their ability and opportunity, not only to convince those about them of the truth, but to awaken them to a sense of duty and to lead them to God? Alas! for the errors, misconceptions and

half-beliefs which prevent so many from seeing and feeling the meaning of our truth, and which thus make them, instead of the earnest workers for themselves and others they ought to be, cold, inactive, without enthusiasm, caring nothing for harmony and intimacy with God and the Saviour for themselves, and caring as little for the conversion and happiness of others. How much such lose for themselves! How much our Church loses because of them!

O, for a just insight by Universalists into the meaning of Universalism as the Gospel of the world's quickening and redemption, and simple consistency with it! If we could but have these, what an awakening we should see! What a melting of hearts! What renunciations of indifference! What a bending of knees! What a clothing of lives in the beauty of new and higher purposes! What demonstrations of the spirit! What resolves and struggles towards personal holiness! What earnestness for the enlightenment and salvation of others! And as the result, how our ministers would all burn with Apostolic zeal and fervor, as some are burning! How our parishes would be increased and vivified! How our whole Church would be pervaded with the life of Christ, and become, beyond all precedents, a power to arouse and animate souls towards goodness, in his discipleship! Why cannot we have these things, the results of a becoming thoughtfulness, insuring the New Departure to which in this respect we are called, and so making us mighty for the conversion of sinners and the widening Christianization of the world?

CHAPTER IX.

EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION.

Our second chapter dealt at length with the lack of distinctively religious results which we have to confess as we sum up the work of our First Century, and with the question of its causes. In the enumeration of these causes, one was left for separate mention here. It is, that our generally accepted theory of Religion has not recognized the necessity, or even the importance, of the experimental type of it. Not that, as a people, we have ever lacked either faith in religion, or respect for it — as we have understood it. Any statement that we have lacked either of these things, by whomsoever made, would grossly misrepresent us. But while we have not lacked in these respects, and have never been without those who have insisted as strenuously as any others on the necessity of Experimental Religion, the conception of religion which has most prevailed, and which, though not so widely as in former years, is still prevalent among us, is that it is a good conscience towards man, rather than a pious heart towards God. A one-sided, because too literal, interpretation has been put on James' words, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Nor is this state of things surprising in view of all the facts. The several explanations set forth in Chapter II., all have their place in accounting for it. And still another, of much weight, must here be added. Protesting against Catholicism and Episcopacy, and reacting from them and their abuses, the Puritans renounced many things which are now seen to have been not only desirable, but, in a sense, essential. The result was a most austere religious life and a singularly barren worship, fitly symbolized in the bleak and rocky coast and the inhospitable soil to which the Plym-

outh pilgrims came. In much the same way, our conception of religion was determined. As recently even as the year of grace, 1865, a committee of the "National Congregational Council," headed by no less a man than Rev. Dr. Shepard, of the Bangor Theological School, pronounced it a "fallacy" to suppose "that converting men, making them Christians, *of course* makes them honest and benevolent"! But when our movement began, this divorce between religion and character was not only much more pronounced, but was almost universally regarded as, beyond question, the right view of the subject. Religion was supposed, *as religion*, to consist wholly in this — that one had 'made his peace with God' in 'a change of heart,' and had become scrupulous in prayers and church-going, and earnest in zeal for the salvation of his own soul and of other souls from hell. Morality, character, was thought to be quite another thing. An unimpeachable life, full of all social kindness and charities, was depreciated as but 'filthy rags'; and it by no means followed, because a man was conspicuously 'pious,' that he was honest, benevolent or trustworthy. Naturally, then, protesting so vigorously against the theological errors they assailed, and disgusted with a pietism so hollow that, whatever might be its meaning towards God, it could, in no single particular, be accepted as a pledge of any good or right thing towards man, our pioneers swung into the other extreme. Specially emphasizing, in their rebound, the long ignored duties to man as cardinal requirements without which there could be no religion worth the name, they failed duly to consider the other side. As the consequence, the phrases 'experiencing religion' and 'experimental religion,' fell into discredit and disuse among us. They and the idea they represent became distasteful to great numbers of our best people, because, it was thought, always carrying with them an odor of cant, and suggesting only an offensive pretentiousness and a pharisaic assumption, which, talking about God and praying much, had occasion to sit at the feet of the worst open-handed and upright 'sinner,' to learn the alphabet of a real fidelity to moral and social obligation. It was overlooked that the *spirit* of James' definition necessarily implies a tender and habitual recognition of "God

and the Father," and thus a life lived always as 'before' Him. Hence its mere *letter* became, to a large extent, our sole and constantly quoted catechism upon the subject. Not only was it insisted, as every right-minded person must insist, that religion means truth and honor and charity; it was also insisted that one who is morally upright, kind to the poor and thoughtful of those in trouble, fulfils all duty, and is in the best sense religious, though what is called piety may fail to appear.

But while it is easy to explain how such a style of thinking came into vogue among us, the thinking itself is none the less to be regretted; nor is what has resulted from it, or our need of a New Departure in respect to it, any less manifest. As between such an estimate of religion, indeed, and that which holds it a 'fallacy' to think "that making men Christians *of course* makes them honest and benevolent," the former is infinitely to be preferred; and while we have occasion deeply to mourn our lack religiously, we have no less occasion to rejoice that, morally, Universalists, as a class, have made for themselves a record confessedly so honorable as an upright and benevolent people. Better this than mere pietism without it — as the recently exposed improbity and turpitude of so many in high places, who had been regarded as distinguished samples of 'evangelical religion,' has impressively taught us. Alas! such revelations, in high or humble places, as they too often occur, do but show us what legitimately comes of that chronic separation of religion and character, which Dr. Shepard's remark so signally illustrates. But both these estimates are incomplete — one quite as much as the other; and as our 'evangelical' friends need to make — as some of them already have made — a new departure in respect to character as a part of religion, we need scarcely less a similar departure in the other direction. It is possible to make no one Christian, *they* need to understand, without making him to the same extent honest and benevolent, since piety, so far as it is genuine, necessarily includes morality; and on the other hand, *we* need to understand, no morality is soundest, or most real, which does not grow from religion as its tap-root. The true life comes only of the harmonious blending of the two.

Very earnestly and decidedly, then, we should at once give ourselves to the New Departure thus indicated — not in thinking of any social charity or fidelity less, but of piety more. Moral faithfulness is indispensable. But nothing is farther from the truth than the idea, however or by whomsoever held, that we are religious enough when we are morally faithful. It virtually ignores God. It fails to take a whole half of our nature into account. It overlooks not only our duty to God, but the indispensable office of a devout regard for Him, as an element in our experience and as a formative force at the centre of our lives. Filial duty is by no means answered in simple kindness to brothers and sisters, and a scrupulous obedience to every parental command. It is answered only when the whole life is possessed and moulded by a filial love. As little is our duty all done, or our whole nature ministered to, in any mere moral fidelity, however exact, or any philanthropic service, however thoughtful. It is answered only as the whole being is pervaded with a sense of God, and all life is made a loving offering to Him.

Religion, having this meaning of piety, it needs far more generally to be seen, is the necessity of every soul : — a necessity because our relations and obligations to God demand it, and not less because our own nature requires it. God is the Life of all life, and the law of all movement and being. All nature confesses Him, and therefore there is order among the circling worlds, and in the domain of matter everywhere. Imagine God out of the universe, or His will no longer recognized, and what would follow? So, equally, God must be the central fact in the life of souls, or moral necessities will as certainly be broken, and moral confusion and death ensue. Hence our constitution, with religious instincts and what we call our religious nature — that we might be held to God as planets are held to their central suns, or the needle to the pole. Neither needle nor planet can wholly divest itself of this innate allegiance, but, however temporarily affected by counter attractions, always, in the end, confesses its original law. So with us in respect to God. Made to be religious, we can never wholly rid ourselves of this tendency, and are sure at some

time to come back to the recognition of God, however we may have lapsed from it. Religion *is* the recognition of God; the centripetal force of the spiritual universe, binding souls to Him; the electric chain, linking us as offspring and Him as Source, through which alone can the vital current be communicated to us. Sever the flower's connection with its root, it withers. Cut off the stream from the fountain, it dries up. Detach the wire from the battery, it is powerless. As inevitably, sever the soul's conscious connection with its God, — let religion be wanting as the medium through which we shall be nurtured in Divine hopes, and be kept sensible of our dependence, and loving as well as loyal in our service, — and, in proportion as this is the case, though intellect and conscience survive, and the formal processes of life go on, the vigor and freshness of our being decay; the healthfulness and harmonious action of our higher faculties fail; spiritually, we die. There is no life away from God, and religion alone keeps us in contact with Him.

Why but on this account does Christianity come to us as it does? A philosophy of spiritual facts and laws, it is at the same time a perfect system of doctrine, and a perfect ethical code. But does it content itself with what it thus is? Far otherwise. Recognizing in us needs and capacities which crave something deeper than any intellectual solution of the universe, and something more interior and vital than any mould for our outward life, it comes to us a Religion, seeking not only to inform the understanding and instruct the conscience, but to take possession of every faculty, pervading it with the required sense of God, and so putting our whole being into time and tune with Him. Only as thus a religion, and on the basis of our religious nature, does it, finally, seek or expect to do anything for us. Of what avail would its effort be, if it did? A genuine manhood or womanhood in Christ, rounding all our noblest possibilities into full expression, is the result it contemplates in respect to each one of us; and how could this be accomplished if the primary element of our spiritual nature, and what is most vital in our relations, had been left out in the process?

Our religious nature is the granitic base and material of character, and on it and out of it only can the highest order of manliness or womanliness be produced. Consider Christ. Had he incarnated simple intellect and bare loyalty to moral law, could his have been the perfect life which now so wins while it awes us? Great intellects and correct lives have many times shone upon the world. The distinction of Christ is that his intellect was so invigored and vitalized by something higher, and deeper, and grander than intellect, and his character so pervaded by the very essence of goodness, and his entire life so attuned into accord with Divine harmonies, that he became in all things so complete as the Ideal Man as to be also the Image of God. And why? Not only because his perceptions of God were so clear, but because his consciousness of Him was so complete; because his trust in Him, and his communion with Him, and his union to Him, were so entire; because his whole soul was so alive with Him, in the quickening of every religious factor of his nature, and the perfect fruitage of every religious possibility. He might have known all he did, and might have been as externally blameless as he was; but, lacking this consummate religiousness which was, at the same time, despite the apparent confusion of figures, the substratum, the essence and the aroma of his life, he could never have been what he was, nor have shed such a power into the world. And he but exemplifies the universal fact. Not only is religion no new invention, the religious needs and tendencies of men being coeval with human existence, but, in every period of the world, the most truly religious man, other things being equal, has been the largest, most philanthropic, noblest man; and all men have been good, happy, truly great, in exact proportion as they have approached the best standard of religious excellence.

And the past in this particular only prophesies the future. There are those who are fond of talking of religion as a superstition, a sort of childishness and temporary weakness of mankind, which is, in due time, to be outgrown, as children outgrow their toys and primers. No doubt the world has much to outgrow — how much, or what, no one can say; and, as the consequence, many things now dear —

usages, opinions, institutions — are doubtless to be cast aside. But, as was in substance said in speaking of Christ, whatever else may be cast aside, religion never will be. There can be no progress beyond the scope of its truths, — no condition of development in which it will have no further office. Opinions will change. Forms will perish. Interpretations will pass away. But man will never outgrow God. Religion there will always be — the necessity of souls; the support and handmaid of the intellectual and moral elements of our being, whatever the progress possible to them. And in heaven, as on earth, human nature and its relations to God continuing the same, the most religious soul, living most in God, will stand in the van of the race, breathing most of that clearer atmosphere; having the broadest outlook, as well as the deepest insight; and exhibiting the noblest specimen of ripened and sanctified human life.

And, all this being true, what is the conclusion in respect to experimental religion to which it conducts us? Clearly, if we are to be religious at all, not religion as a theology, nor as a moral service, but as an experience, — experimental religion, is that which alone meets the demands and conditions in the case. What *is* experimental religion? No wise man should suffer himself to be prejudiced against the thing because the terms by which it is signified may have been abused. This abuse of the terms, indeed, admonishes us that we should distinctly understand what experimental religion is *not*. It is *not* mere church-going, or talk about God and religion, we should bear in mind. It is *not* a pietistic dilettanteism, that affects religious pictures and forms; and, quite as decidedly, it is *not* a mere effervescence of religious sentiment or emotion, that loves devotional meetings, and runs over in pious phrases and professions, and is never so happy as in some convocation for prayer and religious exhortation. One at all experimentally religious, it is true, will naturally love religious associations and exercises. But none of these things in themselves constitute experimental religion; nor is a fondness for them by any means a sure sign of its presence. On the contrary, some of those whom I have known most addicted to them have been, of

all the people I have met, among those farthest from possessing any such religion, and from any just conception of it — because showing, in their meanness, selfishness, or dishonesty, in their fractious or unamiable spirit, that religion was in no positive sense a fact in their lives.

Experimental religion is religion experienced and appropriated as a possessing and governing power. Experimental honesty, democracy, benevolence, is honesty, democracy, benevolence not simply talked and believed in, but understood, felt, put into action. In like manner, experimental religion is real religion — religion felt, applied, permeating the soul, to thrill, quicken and control it. It is the working of God's Holy Spirit of Truth within us, vitalizing and fructifying us — as, if the earth were conscious, spring, summer, autumn, would in turn be its experimental attestation that it had felt itself warmed, watered, and supplied with all the quickening and fertilizing agencies appointed to stir and make it fruitful. It is the life of God in the soul: — what our Lord enjoined when he said, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. . . . He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him, . . . and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. . . . Abide in me, and I in you. . . . He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (John vii. 17; xiv. 21, 23; xv. 4, 5); — what Paul had in his thought when he said, "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us . . . I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . that he would grant you according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Rom. v. 5; Eph. iii. 14, 16–19); — what Peter

meant when he said, "whom, having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet, believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls" (1 Pet. i. 8, 9); — and what John was thinking of when he said, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. . . . For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John v. 3, 4).

It is one of the chief misfortunes of the world, and especially of the church, that so much of its religion is non-experimental — alas! much of it that broadens its phylacteries, and prays loudly, and thinks itself experimental. Reading Morell's "Philosophy of Religion," years ago, I was struck with a statement to this effect: "We pity the deluded people who substitute the superstitious reverence of saints, relics and images for the veneration and heartfelt worship of God. How few reflect that, within our own communities, there are multitudes, claiming to be much more intelligent, who are practising a substitution equally fatal to all that is most elevated in the Christian life — the substitution of terms, phrases, propositions, beliefs, for the vital power of the religion of Christ." It is sad to think how large the number is who make this substitution, and how all the interests that would be furthered by a more living and experimental Christianity are suffering in consequence.

Two things are to be particularly noted as thus resulting.

In the first place, to the extent that it is made, this substitution gives a thin, poor, halting faith, instead of the assurance to which the Christian believer is called. This assurance is one that knows nothing of doubt — that takes hold of Christianity as a fact, and of God, and Christ, and redemption, and immortality, as realities, with a confidence as implicit as that with which we take hold of any fact in the unquestionable order of nature. But such a faith never comes of mere argument.

It is well — on some accounts, very important — that we should thoroughly understand the various proofs of Chris-

tianity, historical and moral, external and internal, that we may thus see how it is established and fortified at every possible point, and so be prepared to answer the objections of unbelief, and the questions of honest inquiry. But these, after all, avail little towards the moral certitude which makes a conviction of the truth of Christianity as absolute as the conviction of one's own existence. Most people take Christianity on trust. Their faith in it is the result simply of education or tradition, and, in the nature of the case, if this is all, cannot, when sharply assailed, be very strong. And the faith that is better founded and more intelligent, but that is only historical, critical, intellectual, however sure, is never so quite sure as to be certain beyond all peradventure. The result of what is called a comparison of evidence, — that is, of a balance of probabilities, with the balance more or less decidedly in favor of Christianity, it is always liable to gusts of questioning and flaws of doubt, as one sailing on some lakes is constantly exposed to squalls, and, if a wise man, always sails with one hand on his rudder, and the other on his 'sheet,' feeling perhaps not insecure, but, all the time, that some unexpected gust may strike him, and, if he is not duly on his guard, upset his boat, and tumble him into the water. For the faith which, whether one accepts Christianity by education, or only after careful inquiry into its proofs, is most confident, putting one entirely at rest, as one sails some placid sea, where no flaws or gusts ever come, and where, before the steady blowing of some favoring breeze, he adjusts his rudder and fastens his sail, and, in a sense of entire security, has no thought except of the calm delight of the hour, and of the place where, by and by, he is to land, one must have the demonstration of experience.

Because of what is thus true, there is perpetual significance in the familiar story of the unlettered man who, being asked by a self-confident sceptic where he found his evidence of Christianity, laid his hand on his heart, saying, *Here.* Only of *this* evidence does the highest assurance come. As the consequence, the more entirely Christian one is, — i.e. the more one has 'Christ in him, the hope of glory,' the instructor of his ignorance, his comfort in sor-

row, his help in every need, the less, so far as he is personally concerned, will be his interest in the ordinary elements of proof, and the more inconsiderable will seem to him their value. Desiring to know whether there really are such places as Niagara and the Yosemite, I do well to collate evidence and study descriptions; but what need have I of these things *if I am there?* How was it with the healed blind man of whom John (ix. 10–33) tells us? Pestered by his cross-examiners with questions which he could not readily answer, this was his sufficient rejoinder, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: *one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.*" What if there were questions which he could not answer? *This* was the impregnable demonstration that Christ was verily from God.

It is as we "*taste* and see that the Lord is good," that we know Him to be so, and find it blessed to trust in Him; and whatever may be our acquaintance with other arguments or evidence, it is only as we have experience of Christianity, and find ourselves illumined, vitalized, saved by it, that we attain to the certitude which says, I *know* it is of God. As Dr. Chapin has somewhere remarked, "The more we get into the very spirit of Christ, and participate in his life and joy, the more we see that he *was and must have been* from God; and the more we test the capacity of his religion for our wants and trials, and find it what we need, the deeper will be our assurance that it is from Him who made us what we are." We thus have the witness within ourselves; and any other is and can be only akin to that which a blind man has of the beauty of a landscape, or of the splendors of the setting sun, or such as one may have concerning the grandeur of the mountains, or the ruins of Thebes, who has only read about, and has never had his soul thrilled among them.

But the great consideration pertaining to this subject is that only an Experimental Religion at all positively answers any religious purpose, or can effectually do the work of saving souls. Any faith in Christianity is, in a sense, something gained — as, if people were suffering on account of a morbid abstinence, something would be gained in getting them to believe in food, and water, and fresh air. But what

would mere belief avail towards sustaining life? As little does any mere belief in Christianity avail for the ends it contemplates. It prepares the way for something better than belief. But, in itself, such a mere opinion is worth little more than any other opinion. Heart as well as head must be affected, if Christianity is positively to accomplish anything. "It's a wonder to me," once said a perplexed and inquiring friend, as we were talking of Christ, "if Christianity is really from God, that it does not take deeper hold of men, and more generally control them. Why doesn't it?" The same question has doubtless occurred to many others, and to answer it thoroughly, numerous causes would have to be taken into account. But here we have the main and most inclusive answer: — Because such vast multitudes are content to believe with the head, and not with the heart. Because so great a proportion of those nominally ranged under the Christian banner are Christians only in a nominal assent, — in a merely historical or traditional faith, — in talk *about* Christianity, instead of being Christians in a faith that pervades and possesses the whole being, transforming Christianity from theory into fact, and so bringing souls into a living union with the Saviour, and filling them with the fulness of God. Appropriation, application, insight, experience are wanting. In other words, Religion is only on the surface of the mind, as an opinion. It fails to go into its depths, among the springs of life, as a principle and a power. Shall we wonder that, under these circumstances, Christianity does not more widely conform life to itself? The wonder is that it has accomplished and is accomplishing so much. It is as if the rain, and sunshine, and all fertilizing agencies could barely touch the face of the soil, — never infiltrate and pervade its substance. How much, were this so, would they do to cover garden and field with the verdure of the spring-time, or to crown the autumn with harvests?

The chapter on Christ Essential glanced at the condition of things before Christ's advent. And why were things so? Not because the world had no truth. It had a great deal of truth; in some form had not a little of that which Christianity more perfectly embodied, — enough, certainly, if it

had been effective, to have made life very different from what it was. But it was ineffective. Why? Because its moral force failed to be seen and felt; because men speculated and believed concerning God and Duty, just as they did about problems in geometry, or rules in mathematics, touched no more spiritually by a Divine thought than by the multiplication-table; because, therefore, consciences were not quickened, nor hearts pricked or melted; in a single word, because there was nothing *experimental* in the faith or religion of the time. The result was that, notwithstanding all the truth the world had, it was 'dead in trespasses and sins,' — ready to perish. Thanks to Christianity, the moral standards of society have greatly changed since then. Higher ideas rule the world. The general conscience has been educated up to far juster estimates of obligation. It takes vastly more now to make a respectably good man or woman than it did then. But so far as the essence and purpose of life, consciously chosen and determined, are concerned, in what respect does the life of the average nominal Christian to-day differ from the life thus prevalent before Christ? How much more has he of an habitual sense of God, — of spiritual awakening and experience, — of penitence for sin, — of a heart given to God and poised on Him? Or, were Christ and Paul now with us in the flesh, how large is the number of whom the former would not say, as he said to the Jews, "I know you that ye have not the love of God in you," or of whom the latter would not repeat his words, — "knowing God, they glorified Him not as God"?

There is weighty significance in the fact thus suggested; and in the light of this fact, is it difficult to see why Christianity does not take deeper hold of men, and more perfectly control them? For what we are unconsciously and without self-purpose, amidst the educative and elevating influences of the Gospel, we are entitled to no credit; and putting this out of the case, we really rise above the heathen, and begin to live on the Christian plane, only when we begin to have our hearts moved in view of the moral meaning of Christianity, and thus to be quickened into the purpose to make it an experimental thing — an inspiration, a law, a power, a life. We may talk, and talk well, about Christianity, and think we

believe it. We may attend where it is preached, and exhibit an unimpeachable morality, and be in good report, as kind-hearted people, among those who know us. But all this does not make us Christians to any best effect. It is only when down into our souls flows a mastering consciousness of God, and of what, as the supreme realities of the universe, God and Christ and Immortality demand, — it is only as, in presence of the Cross, we are touched, humbled, and drawn to God, with hearts awakened and glowing in the purpose to have no other life or law, that we are Christians in truth, knowing something of what the religion of Christ is, and illustrating its efficacy as we experience its quickening and its joy.

And consider, for a moment, what the life of one who has thus *experienced* religion is. I know there are pretenders. I know there are those "having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," and that through the pretences and hollow talk of such, Christ is dishonored, and the very name of experimental religion made a thing to be jeered at. But God does not die, nor Christ become a fable, nor religion cease to be a reality, on account of these things. There are souls — many of them, who are not pretenders, and who, in saintly lives, daily walk in the companionship of Christ, 'dwelling in God, and God in them.' And think what the life of such a one is. What seem dreams or abstractions to others, are the sublimest verities to him. While to others God is an impersonal and shadowy conception, the logical ultimate in the solution of the universe, or an inexorable law, to him He is an encompassing Presence of Mercy, — a Friend who never forgets, — a Father, numbering the hairs of our heads, — a Shield and Help always. While others recognize only external and artificial relations between them and the men and women about them, he sees in all who wear the human form, whatever their complexion or condition, those to whom he is linked by vital and enduring ties — brothers and sisters, to whom he owes a brother's love and service. What to others are but so many meaningless facts are to him the symbols of a tender and comprehensive love, or assurances of a power to which all things are possible, or of a beneficence that never sleeps.

Go where he may, he sees everything instinct with God; and every place and all time and all experience are hallowed by the thought of His care. The universe to him is a temple, life a worship, and every object or circumstance somehow a minister to faith, reverence, or joy. The sunlight greets him as the messenger of an impartial favor, and each star as it shines in the sky of night tells of a goodness that through the darkness watches still. Every flower, as it sheds its fragrance or nods in the wind, is a type of some beautiful thought of God, and all the music of nature does but help to keep his heart in tune. Every joy is sweeter as the gift of a Father's thoughtfulness, and every sorrow is accepted as the appointment or permission of One who is aiming thus to discipline him into a more perfect communion with himself. When clouds gather, he pierces through them, beholding the light beyond. When dear ones die, he calmly bows to their loss in the assurance that they have but preceded him in the journey home. In his moral conflicts, assailed by temptation, or conscious of faults or sin, he looks to Christ and gathers courage, — looks to the cross and gathers strength. Amidst the varied annoyances incident to all earthly conditions, centred on God, he maintains his equanimity and self-possession, and growing sweeter, more thoughtful of others, more forgetful of self, becomes, like ripening fruit, flavored and mellowed by the passing time. And when, at last, death approaches, he closes his eyes on this world, peaceful as he trustingly lays his head on the bosom of God, and breathes out his life here, confident that he is to live forever. By the side of *such* a life, what is the life of the worldling, or the philosopher, or the most genial and unexceptionable moralist even? Only in such a life does one truly live; and however fair or pleasant in its seeming, any other is, at the best, empty and incomplete. In this life only does our whole nature find expression and satisfaction; and whoever fails to live it, and in exact proportion as he fails, comes short alike of the Divine resources, of the rounded character, and of the strength and peace in which alone our destiny is fulfilled.

Is not such a life one to be desired? But experimental religion — religion as a vital principle and power in the soul — alone makes it possible. For this reason, many very

excellent people fail of it. Excellent in many respects, they come short of the roundest and completest life, because they have never experienced religion; have never had their hearts kindled; have never felt the glow of God's life in theirs. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" asked Paul of the disciples at Ephesus; to which they replied, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." And this is what the class of persons referred to would have to say, if asked the same question. They do not know that there is any Holy Ghost. But Christ's baptism is a baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire — a baptism of awakening and consecrating power; and only as we receive this baptism, and, in penitence, love, and self-surrender, are impelled to take Christ's hand, in trust and prayer, — to walk as he leads, to feel as he felt, to try to live as he shows us how, — are we, or can we be, lifted into the noblest living, because only thus can we have Christianity *in* us the ministry it aims to be, or have it go out *from* us the saving influence God has designed. Christianity masters and ripens only those whom it experimentally enters, melts and possesses.

These things being so, the issue tendered all who profess to believe in Christ is obvious. It is — an experimental religious life, or a life empty alike of the moral flavor and spiritual power of the Gospel, failing of real completeness, whatever its excellences, and resembling in essence the lives of those who knew not Christ, and who were perishing in consequence. This is no mere talk. It is solemn fact, if God and Christ and souls are facts. And, full of interest to all, this alternative should be of special interest to us. Universalism is nothing if it is not the awakening and life-giving religion of Christ. It *is* this, we are pertinaciously affirming. Were it possible for us to be convinced that it is not, who is there of us that would not at once abandon it? And if it is what we thus insist, "what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness!" How our hearts ought to thrill and burn with the Divine afflatus, and our lives give evidence of its indwelling presence and inspiration! Nowhere on the broad earth is there a man or woman who ought to be so devout, with a

heart so glowing, with a life so built on religion as a principle, and so pervaded by it as a power, as the Universalist; none is so utterly without excuse for not being so. For think what we have to impress and move us, in the Divine Father and His pitying and pleading love; in a Saviour so devoted and compassionate, so tenderly and unconquerably wedded to our redemption; in the conversation with heaven and the communion with our departed to which we are invited; and in all the sanctions and appeals by which we are addressed. Whatever the strength of his conviction intellectually, or however ready or zealous in church work, one cannot be most fully a Universalist, or be able to do most for Christ, and truth, and souls, under the banner of Universalism, until he has thus experienced it as a RELIGION, seeing and feeling that it *is* a religion, and giving daily evidence that it has effectually wrought within him.

It is one of the chief misfortunes of Universalism that it is so widely supposed to be fatally wanting in religious efficacy. This impression it is our duty immediately to correct; but it can be corrected only as we bear in mind the Master's test, "By their fruits ye shall know them." One life demonstrating that Universalism has power to infuse a sense of God into souls, and to make His life theirs, will do more than whole libraries of books, or any amount of argument. It is this power that the world now most needs; and, because of its alleged fitness to communicate this, Universalism, we are claiming, is the providential answer to the need. Shall we fail to make it such an answer in fact, because failing ourselves to appropriate and experience what it religiously is? Alike for our own sakes, that we may personally know the best blessings of our faith, — and for the sake of the Gospel in our keeping, that its real character may be vindicated, — and for the sake of our Church, that it may be made vital with the living Christ, — and for the sake of the world, that the power which alone can possess and save may be shed into it, — we should, with one consent, straightway give ourselves to the New Departure which justice to Universalism as a Religion demands. It is a shame to us that, with so much to make us vitally religious beyond all others, we are showing comparatively so little sign of it. Let this reproach henceforth cease.

CHAPTER X.

CONSECRATION.

Consecration is defined to be "the act of setting apart a person or thing to the service or worship of God; dedication to a sacred use." Every determinate giving of one's self to a good cause, or to a noble act or course of action, is therefore of the nature of consecration; and no life takes on its highest character, our service of God never becomes most positive and complete, until it has this element of consecration at its centre.

Even Christ, we are told, was made "perfect through sufferings;" and what finally were these sufferings but so many tests of his consecration? There is an important sense in which he was 'sent,' as the messenger of God's truth, and especially as the commendation of God's love. He frequently so spoke of himself, and was as frequently so spoken of by his Apostles. But we do not at all properly understand him when we only so think of him. We must see him as one who *came*, as well as one who was *sent*, — as one who *gave himself*, as well as one who was *appointed of God*, before we can have an insight into *the* characteristic of his life, and so begin to perceive what it is that renders his mission most an object of interest, and that makes him most potent to affect and attract souls. As we saw in the chapter, "Bought with a Price," "he gave himself for us." Herein is his distinction, — his glory. In other words, he consecrated himself, as God's instrument, to our welfare and salvation, — as he said to the Jews, "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. . . . Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself" (John x. 11, 17, 18); and as he said in his prayer before his betrayal, "For their sakes, I sanctify [or consecrate] myself" (John xvii. 19). There

is something vastly beyond any idea of being simply *sent* in all this. As a good writer has well said, —

"There was a certain *voluntariness* about his mission, which we lose sight of when we regard him as simply the follower of an inexorable law, or as coming to man's help only because he was 'sent.' I cannot fathom Divine council, and determine by what election or selection Jesus was commissioned; but this I feel — that the commission, the appointment, did not alone constitute him the Messiah. He did not come as a king's messenger, as an envoy of an empire, solely at command. There was a deliberate acceptance of the office; and this, not in the mere boy-resolve of the Temple, or the secret struggle and purpose of the desert, nor by baptism in the Jordan, but by going out into life, and carrying the spirit of self-sacrifice into everything, else 'he had not been a man after God's idea of manhood; for the idea of man which God had been for ages laboring to give, through a consecrated tribe and a consecrated nation, was the idea of a being whose life-law is *sacrifice*, every act and every thought being devoted to God.' His whole life was proof of his declaration, 'I sanctify [rather, consecrate] myself.' To have been merely *sent* made him a servant, at best a later Moses; but to *accept* the mission made him a son — Jesus, the Christ."

And what was thus true of Christ is, in our several places, true of every one of us all. Life becomes saintliest and noblest only as, under the inspiration of a noble and unselfish purpose, we deliberately give ourselves, in a sacrifice of all that an opposite course has to offer us, consecrate to whatever God, in Christ, demands. In a sense, again appropriating the words of the writer above cited, —

"Every man is 'sent' into the world; but not till he consciously, deliberately, accepts his mission, can he become lifted up into the great heirship with Christ; not till then is he a 'son.' The act of sending, on the part of God, must be supplemented by the act of acceptance on the part of man. And the acceptance must be without reserve. Not only must he take God's gift of life, but he must give life to duty; not merely must he surrender himself to the Divine will, — which is compulsion, — but he must consecrate himself to the Divine love, which is choice. This is the complement to God's act, without which it cannot be complete. It matters not what other consecrating there may have been, what setting apart by parents or in church, what dropping of water, what imposition of hands, what repeating of catechism, what signing of creed; it is all formal and valueless until the man has set himself apart in solemn self-dedication. Balaam and Jonah, and many another, have been appointed to great duties, — have been solemnly put aside for special work, — yet have utterly failed to do it,

because there was no inward consecrating, seconding and sealing that of God or man. The descending of the spirit upon Jesus, or any other appointing of God, had availed nothing to make him the world's Redeemer, had he not consecrated himself. It was the spirit in him, meeting, co-operating, blending with the spirit from on high, that gave him the power to be the Son of God: it is that in us which shall lift us to be sons.

"Self-consecration, the giving of one's self up to the service of God, is the grand, decisive, voluntary act of the soul, which strikes at the root of all worldliness and selfishness, and accepts without reserve whatever God may order to be done, or to be borne. It is the putting side by side what the world has to offer, and what God has to offer, and the unreserved acceptance of the offer of God. It is the conscious and free acceptance of the high destiny God lays before His children; the resolve to dedicate wholly body and mind and heart as a reasonable, holy and acceptable sacrifice. It is the entrance into the spirit of Jesus, and the carrying of the spirit out into all the details of life, in devotedness to man and devotion to God. It is the full *at-one-ing* of the two wills; the reach of the spirit in man after the spirit of God; the approach of the finite towards the Infinite; the soul's eternal task and grandest privilege. It is not an act of the will alone, one single, great resolve, — the vision of the Mount, — the luxurious, beatific attitude of faith and hope and longing, into which secret prayer and thought sometimes throw us, when we taste angels' food, and feel as if the kingdoms of the world were already at our feet; not the transfiguration, but the after-duty, the coming in cooler blood down amid the things of earth, the meeting and casting out of the kind that only goes out by the spirit's fast and prayer. The true law of every life, the only law of life, is consecration; and 'consecration is not wrapping one's self in a holy web in the sanctuary, and then coming forth after prayer and meditation, saying, "There, I am consecrated." Consecration is going out into the world where God is, and using every power to His glory. It is simply dedicating one's life, its whole flow, to His service.'"

It is for this reason that the Christian Life has, necessarily, always something heroic in it. The essence of heroism is self-sacrifice, and this, as above appears, is the essence of consecration also. No self-consecration is possible without it. In the highest sense, it is true, there is no such thing as self-sacrifice except in the service of wrong — since we win the real prizes of being in exact proportion as we serve God and the Right, and sacrifice ourselves only when we sell our birthright for a mess of pottage, in a forgetfulness of what is best and broadest and most enduring in us for the sake of the poor possessions, or gratifications, that perish in the using. Christ found vastly more for himself

in serving our race for its salvation, though at so great a cost, than he could have found had he declined the work in a mean regard only for his own ease. Always, to be most noble is to be most blessed; and despite the seeming paradox, we really gain least, in respect to all that constitutes us men and women, when we think of ourselves most, sacrificing least. But speaking in the ordinary sense, and of those things which most people find it hardest to give up, Christ sacrificed himself for our sake, and we sacrifice self whenever, with a

> "self-renouncing will,
> That tramples down and casts aside
> The baits of pleasing ill,"

we act in a similar spirit. And in this sense, consecration is always heroic, because it is the utter renunciation of ourselves and our own wills, or preference, in the purpose to give ourselves to God and His service. Christ is the most heroic soul in all history, because his consecration was like his robe, 'without seam.' "Not my will, but thine be done," was not alone the outcry of his anguish in Gethsemane. It was the innermost speech of his whole life, in a self-abnegation that, with no thought of himself, or his own pleasure, said constantly, For myself, nothing — only the privilege of serving and saving; — for God, and for others, everything. How else could his life have had that quality which now most appeals to and touches us, most irresistibly demanding appreciation and response on our part? And a like heroism, in a like self-abnegation, must possess and inspire every life that aims to be at all like his.

There is a prevalent idea that the life of the Christian is tame and spiritless — fitting for women and children, and for languid, inert, flaccid men, but not at all the thing for brave, robust, energetic masculine wills. But this is only one of numerous grave misconceptions touching the subject. The Christian Life is not only the saintliest, it is the most heroic life any soul can live. The most forceful will, the most robust and invincible energy, the most aspiring purpose finds here a field for its exercise — in the battle that must be fought with temptation; in the struggle that must be made

with selfishness ; in the wrestle and conflict with all the various agencies which conspire to bring us into captivity to sense and sin, and in the resolve to vanquish ' everything that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God,' and to subject ' every thought to the obedience of Christ.' In all this there is abundant scope for whatever there is in any man ; and he who conquers, and, as the result, presents himself, body and spirit, a living sacrifice unto God, has done the grandest and most heroic thing any man can do — compared with which all that the world calls success is empty, and all that it worships as heroism is poor and vain. How finely this is illustrated in Paul, as he pictures himself in the race, forgetting everything else, and ' reaching forth ' that he might ' win Christ, and be found in him,' saying, " *This one thing I do,*" — or as he stands amidst the sorrowing elders of Ephesus, foreseeing ' bonds and afflictions,' but bravely declaring, " Yet none of these things move me, *neither count I my life dear unto myself*" ! Here was consecration without reserve, and here, therefore, was heroism such as the world has seldom seen. And our call is, to be heroes, every one of us, like him, in a consecration as entire — as a soldier, giving himself to his country, in this act renounces everything but the will to do his duty as he is commanded, for his country's sake ; as a mother, giving herself to motherhood and its obligations, surrenders every other will or purpose but the purpose to serve her children faithfully, be the requirements of such fidelity what they may ; as Christ, giving himself to us and our redemption, had no other will but to accept whatever the task included, and to make it his very " meat to do the will of Him that sent him, and to finish His work."

Consecration is thus the key-stone in the arch of Christian Experience. First comes Conviction — or the awakening of the conscience and the heart to a sense of duty ; then Conversion — or the turning of the soul definitely towards God and an unselfish and saintly life ; and then Consecration — or the solemn and continuous giving of one's self to Christ, —

> " When we have sworn and steadfast mean,
> Counting the cost, in all t'espy
> Our God, — in all ourselves deny."

It is the culmination of all preceding experience and resolve — as marriage is the culmination of love and all its pledges. It *is* the marriage of the soul in solemn covenant to Christ — to live with him, and in him, and for him, until death — and forever. Without this, everything else in the way of discipleship is incomplete — as roots without flowers or fruit are incomplete; as a foundation without superstructure, as love without marriage, is incomplete. This alone puts us into the calendar of God's faithful and accepted ones. Generous impulses are not despised. Respectable habits and conventional virtues fail not to be counted for whatever they are worth. But these, whatever the life they produce, never answer the highest demands. Only consecration does this — because it alone imparts the element of heroic surrender and purpose, and thus makes all life, from innermost thought to outermost action, a renunciation of self, and an offering to God.

Has this subject hitherto had the place in our thoughts and labors to which it is entitled? We have insisted on a good life; but have we urged and emphasized the necessity of this absolute and supreme Consecration, as the facts and principles in the case require? Something of the spirit thus demanded we have had, giving us — among our ministers, some as devoted, unselfish, heroic, as have ever lifted hand or voice for the Gospel's sake, and among our people, some as earnest, self-denying, saintly, as the church, under any name, has ever known. But, as previous chapters have indicated, the proportion of such has not been what it should have been, nor has our system of effort contemplated such a result with the solicitude it should have done. We need an awakening and a New Departure in this respect, therefore. Perhaps this was sufficiently implied in our last chapter, no Experimental Religion being possible without a consecrating purpose. But the subject is so important, and has, moreover, commanded among us so little of the attention to which it is entitled, that I have thought it deserving of distinct and special presentation. It must henceforth occupy a place in our regards and methods more commensurate with its real deserts, or our personal service of Christ will never have the self-surrender and

heroism which can alone give it completeness, and our Church will fatally lack the enthusiasm and spiritual fervor without which it must fail of the work to which it is called.

If anything, Christ must be paramount. No other view can be consistently taken of our obligations to him and the Christian Life. Is there a God, and do we belong to Him? Is Christ a reality, and has he died to redeem us? Is all our power to think, to feel, to do, from God, and are all our best ideas, and finest resources, and richest privileges and opportunities, only parts of the result of what Christ has done? Then what alternative have we but to confess our obligations, and to give ourselves to God in Christ with the entire unreserve which these things, if they be facts and not fables, so obviously require? Or, what reason has there ever been why any should forget self, and consecrate themselves to God, that does not equally exist in the case of every one of us? We just now looked at Paul, in his utter and heroic self-devotion. Did he do more than his duty? Or, did any of the Apostles, or any of the saints and martyrs who,

> "in life and death,
> With Christ, their Lord, in view,
> Learned from the Holy Spirit's breath
> To suffer and to do"?

If not, by what motive were they addressed that is not as imperatively addressed to us, or in what respect is the obligation of any one of us less than theirs?

Another consideration is not unworthy of mention. Does not self-respect suggest that, having become identified with any work, or responsible for any duty, we shall aim to be all that the work or duty requires? How much self-respect has one who, having enlisted as a soldier, is willing to be a deserter or a coward, or fails to consecrate himself, soul and body, to his country and to his duty as its champion and defender? Or, how much self-respect has a wife, or a mother, who is not anxious to be all that a wife or a mother should be? Apply the same principle to the subject before us, and what follows? Making any pretence to faith in God, or Christ, does not self-respect require that we be no less anxious to fulfil the whole duty such a faith imposes? But

who does this, or can do it, without the central and controlling consecration which Christ illustrates, and which the whole Bible enjoins?

As the writer already quoted admirably says,* —

"The failure of men so largely in the true life is because they will not comprehend what an *utter* thing consecration is, and how *utterly* impossible the kingdom is without it. The difference between a man who has consecrated himself, and the man who has made up his mind that on the whole it is better for him to lead a correct life, is as the difference between fiction and fact. Nothing can turn the man consecrate. Like Paul, he counts all loss gain; and the catalogue of pains and penalties is but his inspiration. What would deter others stimulates him: what would dismay, confirms. No high endeavor, no grand result, comes otherwise. It is the man rising to his noblest height, doing all things through the Christ strengthening him; the man no way lukewarm, but kindling with, possessed by, 'the enthusiasm of humanity,' and so treading down all intervening obstacles, till, more than conqueror, he wins 'that crown with peerless glories bright.'

"I know just what every one says down in his heart as he reads this. I know how we shrink from such deliberate surrender of ourselves, our *all*, to God's law; and I know how utterly life fails of its grandeur, how it loses the promise in this, and its hope in the life to come, because this *one absolutely necessary thing* we will not do. We are willing enough to serve God if we can only make our own reservations. Rebels so gladly take the oath of allegiance. But it is the reservation which kills the quality of the loyalty: it is the reservation that makes of us, not followers of God, as dear children, but timid and time-serving and unreliable slaves, — in the thing easy, the thing convenient, the thing in which we see immediate reward or penalty, obedient; but when the pressure comes, and the whole man is called on, when a cross is to be borne, hesitating, half faithful, or recreant. There are times of tribulation in every human experience, often unrecognized by other men, — things in our inner secret lives, as well as of our outward and visible, — when nothing can stand but the soul which is *all* God's; there are times when men terribly fail, when the disaster of their moral overthrow is broad and deep. It is only the old story. The house is built upon the sand. The life is not riveted into the core of the rock. There has been some reserve in the consecration, — a secret flaw, which at the test-moment betrays itself, and wrecks the man. We do not want to be at the mercy of flaws. In the metal thoroughly welded flaws will not be. Make self-consecration thorough, and the gates of hell cannot prevail."

* These several extracts are from an article by Rev. J. F. W. Ware, credited by one of our papers to the "Monthly Journal." They so precisely express what I desired to say, that I deemed it wiser to appropriate the language, and give credit accordingly, than to undertake to clothe the same ideas in words of my own.

Shall not this whole subject have the increased attention among us which it deserves, and will we not as a Church at once commit ourselves to the New Departure concerning it whereunto we are so clearly called? Universalism above all other forms of Christian Faith fulfils all the conditions of a consecrating power. How it fills and satisfies the believing soul! What revelations it makes of God's love and of Christ's redeeming force, and what visions it opens of the harmony in which all God's creatures are to be reconciled to Him and brought into unity with each other! How it glorifies alike joy and sorrow in the radiance of a changeless beneficence! How it pours balm into every bleeding heart! And while it so proclaims the inexorable certainty of retribution, how it plies us with motives — irresistible, when understood — to know only the will of God as our rule of life, and to yield ourselves to Christ's guidance as the sole condition of the highest good! Could we but once be touched by the power of all that our faith thus is, we should need no argument, or exhortation, to move us to consecrate ourselves to it, and to the service of the Father and the Saviour who speak to us through it. Our whole being would be flooded with a sense of obligation and privilege; and glowing with grateful emotion and holy purpose, we should each prostrate ourselves at the feet of Christ, exclaiming,—

"More love to thee, O Christ,
More love to thee!
Hear thou the prayer I make
On bended knee;
This is my earnest plea —
More love, O Christ, to thee,
More love to thee!

"Once earthly joy I craved,
Sought peace and rest;
Now thee alone I seek:
Give what is best.
This all my prayer shall be —
More love, O Christ, to thee,
More love to thee!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE BIBLE.

It is one of the honorable distinctions of the Universalist Church, that it has, from the first, been built "on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." Strangely outlawed, ecclesiastically, as infidels, and popularly regarded as enemies of the Bible insidiously concealing its rejection under its pretended use, we have all the time steadily made faith in it, next to character, *the* cardinal condition to our fellowship. No Christians, indeed, have evinced a profounder or more sincere reverence for the Bible, or have furnished abler or more earnest defenders of it, or have more constantly or conscientiously deferred to its authority, than we. In the whole history of theological misrepresentation, there is nothing grosser — in the case of those who have known better, nothing more wicked — than the systematic falsification of our position in this particular, — a falsification that has doubtless done more than any other single cause to make Universalism odious in the estimation of Christian people, and to procure for us the treatment we have so unjustly received as 'heathen-men and publicans.' No odium, no unkind treatment was ever more undeserved. The Bible has been our final appeal always; and during these past thirty years especially, amidst the speculations of German rationalism, and a 'liberal Christianity' that has been but a second edition of old-fashioned Deism 'revised,' while many others have yielded, or oscillated, we have stood like a rock, — conceding all that genuine scholarship and honest criticism have required, but adhering immovably to the Divine origin of the Bible, and affirming its authority with the same positiveness with which we have affirmed the existence of God and the reality of Christ himself. In this respect, no New Departure is possible for us in the direc-

tion of faith, for neither we, nor any other church, can stand more firmly by the Bible, or more strenuously insist on its Divine worth and claims, than we have done. And yet, we nevertheless need a New Departure concerning it, and shall not cease very seriously to suffer in our most vital interests, so long as this Departure fails to be fittingly made.

Two questions of fundamental interest meet us touching the Bible: — the first concerns its origin; the second concerns our need of it. With the first, it does not fall within the purpose of these pages, except incidentally, to deal; but the second sustains such relations to the fact with which this chapter is specially concerned, that only through some notice of it can we be best introduced to what is to follow.

The chapter on Experimental Religion referred to what God is as the central Life of the universe. And because of what He thus is, a knowledge of Him, that there may be conformity to His will, is a necessity of souls. Imagine the consequences should our globe, or the planets in space, break away from His hand, or should a tree, or a field of wheat, try the experiment of growing in some other way than in accordance with the methods He has ordained, and we only imagine results in the material world analogous to those which actually occur whenever and wherever a soul sets up for itself, and undertakes to live in defiance or in disregard of Him as the centre and law of moral being.

But how shall we attain this knowledge of God and of the moral conditions He has established, which is so essential for us? Is it said that all Nature is open to us, and that, with this and the spiritual instincts and intuitions of our own souls — reason, conscience, and the religious sentiment, we have all that is requisite for our instruction? But how much will these teach us? Look at the idolater and the polytheist, look wherever men, of themselves as only thus aided, have constructed theologies, and attempted to solve the problems of God and of our own being, duty and destiny, and see. All men have Nature and its teachings, such as they are. All men have more or less of rea-

son, conscience, and the religious sentiment. But do all men know God, or have all men attained, or even approached just conceptions of His character, or correct estimates of human relations and obligations, or a satisfactory philosophy of death? God is just, indeed, and holds no man responsible for more than He has given him. Hence, we are never to overlook, enough is furnished in these sources of natural suggestion and instruction to make it proper that even those least favored shall be held to moral account, because supplied with the materials for some ideas of a Supreme Power and moral duty. Accordingly, though arguing to show the insufficiency of these things for the highest purposes, Paul distinctly testifies of God that "His eternal power and Godhead, though they be invisible, yet" have been "seen ever since the world was made, being understood by His works, that they [who hold the truth in unrighteousness] might have no excuse" (Rom. i. 20); and further, that "the Gentiles . . . though they have no [specially announced moral] law, are a law to themselves, since they manifest the work of the law written in their hearts, and their conscience also bears them witness, while their inward thoughts, answering one to the other, either justify or else condemn them"* (Rom. ii. 14, 15). And yet, though this is true, and all that *could* be thus given has been imparted, still, in the nature of the case, it does not and cannot answer all that is required — any more than the ability of a child to attain some things of itself enables it thus to gather all that is important for it to know. The child needs help from some superior mind, and without it will come, at length, to a point beyond which it can proceed no farther. We, it is true, ripen out of our childish capacities as the years pass; but in presence of the grand and infinite mysteries of being, we are always children, unequal, of ourselves, to the task of grasping and solving them. At the most, when what is called Natural Religion has done all it can for us, we get only rudimentary hints, — never full and definite instruction; are able simply to walk along the skirts of the delec-

* Conybeare and Howson.

table mountains, — never to scale their heights and get their broadest outlooks. For these, we must have help from some source outside ourselves, and higher than we — interpreting Nature for us more perfectly than we can; informing reason, educating conscience, enlightening the religious sentiment; and except as this help is given, and in condescension to our inability, God thus makes himself and related spiritual facts and truths known, no clear knowledge or assurance concerning them is possible to us.

There is a broad distinction between such spiritual knowledge and what is called scientific knowledge, which many fail to consider. Do we need any special help from God to instruct us in Chemistry, Natural Philosophy, or Mathematics? it is not unfrequently asked, with much show of confidence — as if our competency to make our way unaided in these implies an equal competency in the domain of spiritual truth. But, unfortunately for this kind of argument, there is an important difference between these departments of knowledge. In all scientific or mathematical investigations, we have some certain data of fact or figures, to commence with, and thus, for every step we take, have the solid rock to stand upon — because having the means for testing and demonstrating the correctness of our conclusions. But it is not so when we enter upon religious investigations. The required data are nowhere to be had. Like one attempting an hypothesis concerning the inhabitants of the sun, or trying to solve an arithmetical problem that furnishes no initial figures, we are in the realm of pure conjecture, with no facts to build on; are dealing altogether with 'unknown quantities,' with no known quantity as a starting-point. "Give me a place to stand," said Archimedes, "and I will move the world." No doubt; but where is he to stand? True, as has been intimated, there are some data which, left to ourselves, we are warranted in regarding as certainties, and on the basis of which some rudimentary moral and religious ideas may be built; but they are not the kind required for a complete and satisfactory theology. They give us glimpses and suggestions; but when we push our inquiries, and ask who God is, and precisely what are His relations to us, and who

we are, and what are our duties, and what is to become of us, we at once find ourselves launched upon a sea of uncertainty, where, without chart, compass, light-house, or sounding-line, we can only sail by guess; are hopelessly confronted by moral and spiritual summits, rising sheer before us, up which there are no steps of induction or inference, no processes of logic, no certainties from any source about us, or within us, by which we can climb into any knowledge, or absolute faith, by way of demonstration.

This the whole history of our race, from first to last, proclaims. At all events, it proclaims that men of themselves *do* not attain any certitude or demonstration; and considering the universality of this fact, not only the fair, but the inevitable conclusion is that they *can* not. Else, why do we not somewhere find men outside the line of what is alleged to be supernatural illumination, making some progress in religious ideas? That we do not, save as, here and there, an exceptional mind has gone beyond the masses in its unavailing speculations — speculations which have seldom had any practical fruit, is known to all who know anything of the religious history of mankind. Look at China. Except as it has been inoculated with the ideas of Christendom through the freer intercourse of these later years, it presents to-day the same idolatry, the same low religious conceptions as centuries ago. So with Japan. So with India. So — saying nothing of those lower down in the scale of development — with every comparatively cultivated or half-civilized people of whom we have any information. Why should this be so, if men unaided are sufficient for all the purposes of moral and religious knowledge? Does not the fact that it is so demonstrate man's incompetency, of himself, to deal with the spiritual problems which press upon us, and so demonstrate the necessity for some direct and special communication from God?

The Bible purports to be such a communication — or, rather, the record of a series of such communications. Is it worthy of our confidence as such, and can we accept its enunciations concerning God, and truth, and duty, as giving us the certain knowledge we need? If it is — and here is the point for which the considerations foregoing

have been designed to prepare — if it is, then the necessity in answer to which it was bestowed, no less demands that it shall be used ; nor can it be neglected, or pushed aside by anything else, except at the peril of all the interests it is intended to serve. If it be, in fact, from God, it is not a thing to be trifled with. What it contains is for the life of souls and the life of the world ; and spiritual darkness and death are the penalties of ignoring, or undertaking to live without it. What but this is the sum of the universal testimony it has made for itself? 'Sacred books' are, indeed, not uncommon among the nations ; and there are those who would have us regard the Bible as only of the same character as all the rest. But look along the track of any other 'sacred books' which the world has ever heard of, — look, one by one, through the several fields they have professed to illumine, and, as compared with the results which have attended the Bible, what have they, any of them, ever done for man, or for men? Even out of our Christian churches some are issuing, in these days, who, forgetting what, under God, has made them in all that is best in their manhood or womanhood, are glorifying Buddhism, vaunting it as not inferior to, if it does not excel, Christianity. But, as Wendell Phillips has well said, "to all this, the answer is, *India, past and present.*" And so in respect to all that may, directly or indirectly, be set up to rival or equal the Bible, the one answer is, *Tell us what it has done!* The awakened but unlettered sailor, wishing to purchase a Bible, happily designated it as "the Book that speaks for itself;" and in nothing does it more eloquently, or more demonstrably, speak for itself than in the work of enlightenment, healing and quickening it has accomplished. History is to be searched in vain for any similar work, or for any that begins to approach it.

Let it be granted, if any so desire, that the Bible has not equally illuminated all minds where its light has shined, nor conquered all error or evil where it has wrought. Let it be granted that many who have professed to be its friends have been corrupt and cruel, and that were any one to retort the question concerning those to whom it has come, which was just now asked of those having only Nature and their

own spiritual instincts and intuitions for their teachers, the question, viz.: Have they all attained just conceptions of God, or correct estimates of human relations and obligations, or a satisfactory philosophy of death? we should be compelled to answer, very emphatically, No. But what gift of God fully, or soon, accomplishes all for which it was designed? In its very nature, the work intended through the Bible is progressive, and therefore gradual — as the work of the sun, every day, is by degrees to dissipate the darkness, not instantaneously to transform night into noonday. The Bible is leaven; and of necessity, all leaven does its work slowly, atom by atom. But let any one, friend or foe, candidly survey the field of the Bible's influence, or apply any honest test as to the extent of its leavening power, and what, unmistakably, does he see? What transformations! What victories over darkness and wrong! What consolations! What awakenings! What rough places smoothed, and crooked places made straight! What births and growths of finer and loftier sentiment, of nobler character, of holier and saintlier living! Account for it as we may, the fact is indisputable that wherever the Bible has become most an element in the popular life, *there* are found the most of those fruits which might be expected to grow from the seeds of a Divine Revelation. The worst and darkest periods in the history of the Jewish nation were the periods when their Scriptures were most forgotten and neglected; and the darkest and saddest portions of Christian history are those in which the Bible was least in the people's hands, and its spirit least in their hearts. Undeniably, the argument of RESULTS is altogether on the side of the Bible; and if a tree is known by its fruits, the conclusion is inevitable that the Bible is Divine. How otherwise are we to account for what it has done? Let those who declare it *not* of God answer this question.

Meanwhile, not now further to press this argument of results, we may confidently hold the Bible in the face of the world, and, whether it be Divine or not, can say, in the graphic language of the prophet, Unto *this* let men seek: "if they will not speak according to this word, . . . every one of them shall pass through the land distressed and famished;

. . . and he shall cast his eyes upwards and look down to the earth, and lo! distress and darkness! gloom, tribulation and accumulated darkness" * (Isa. viii. 20–22)! No words can better describe what comes of rejecting, or of not having the Bible. Where do we find the highest conceptions of God — conceptions which, while far beyond any that unaided man has ever attained, are yet such as lie most easily in our minds and hearts, most accordant with all that Nature suggests, and with what reason, conscience and the religious sentiment demand? Where do we find the clearest and best ideas of duty, and the firmest and most intelligent assurance of Immortality, and the largest measure of moral and intellectual development, and the most elevated character, and the most advanced type of what we mean by civilization? Where, but exactly where the Bible has most fully done its work? The zone of light around the globe is the zone of the Bible. The leading countries of the world — the countries whose people *are* most and *have* most, are the countries where the Bible is most read, and in which it may claim to have had its practical worth best put to the test. In proportion as we go outside its ideas and moral force, we go into shadow: — go into the midst of superstition and general ignorance; go into the midst of despotism or a savage freedom; go where man is degraded and woman a slave; go where it is literally true, in respect to all highest human needs and interests, that souls "pass through the land distressed and famished," and where everything attests the absence of any sufficient power to instruct and elevate the people.

Contrast the condition of Catholic and Protestant countries, — or the Catholic and Protestant portions of the same country. Why should not those that are Catholic be as far advanced in freedom, in general intelligence, in material enterprise, in all the elements of the highest civilization, as those that are Protestant? Can any reason be found in the nature or capacities of the people? I am not aware that it can. But who does not know that an immeasurable difference is shown in such a comparison? The puritans came to

* Lowth's translation.

the rugged shores of New England, bringing nothing but themselves and the Bible, and finding no gold, no soft and genial climate, no rich and productive soil — finding only an inhospitable climate and a land of granite and of ice. The cavaliers and adventurers of Spain went to the fair and fruitful fields of Mexico and Peru, finding a delicious climate, a productive soil, and mines inestimably rich in gold, but carrying no Bible. What is the result? New England is what she is ; — the Spanish colonies are what they are. To the same effect, Spain and Portugal in contrast with England, South America in contrast with the United States, — or, if one wishes to look into the same country, the Catholic and Protestant cantons of Switzerland, the Catholic and Protestant districts in Ireland, Louisiana and Massachusetts in our own land, are further illustrations. Why this difference? Various causes unquestionably combine to explain it; but the chief is to be found in a series of facts of which the Bible is the centre. Protestantism, based on the right of private judgment, puts the Bible into the people's hands, and imbibing its ideas, the people become quickened by its moral power ; while Catholicism withholds the Bible, or gives it to the people only through the lips of priests, or in the interpretations of the church. During these last few years, Italy seems to have re-awakened, and more recently, the political regeneration of Spain seems to have begun; but the complete resurrection and enfranchisement of their people will come only when they shall be a Bible-reading and Bible reverencing people, and when home and church and state shall feel the inspirations which the Bible can alone shed into them. And could the Bible be to-day given to poor, priest-ridden Ireland, or to Mexico, or to South America, so that the masses of the people should be transfused with its ideas, and nurtured and established in its principles, a new life would at once be manifest in them all, and the contrast now so painfully apparent between them and Protestant countries would straightway begin to disappear.

These are facts often referred to, but that never yet have commanded the general consideration they deserve. "*This is the cannon that is to emancipate Italy,*" Garibaldi was,

some years ago, reported to have said to his son, handing him a Bible. The remark may or may not have been made; but it is worthy to have been, for it is true. As has, in substance, been said, the history of the Bible is that of the world's best civilization. Everywhere, it has been the herald of social progress and a ripening culture. Nay, more than this, to change the figure, has it not proved, wherever planted, 'the tree of life,' whose leaves have been for the healing of the nations? Oppressions have disappeared, thrones have tottered, ignorance and superstition have fled because of it. Catching instruction and inspiration from it, the masses have been filled with a sense of their manhood, and have risen into a perception of their rights. Star-chamber and stamp-act have given way. Ship-money and tea-tax have been resisted. Freedom has been achieved. Schools have multiplied. Laws have softened. All refining and elevating agencies have been increased; and the varied elements — moral, intellectual, spiritual, that, if the promises of God and the visions of prophets are ever to be realized, are at some time to culminate in the millennium on earth, and more perfectly in the life of the redeemed in heaven, have more and more borne sway.

And all this, let it be observed, on account of the inherent and quickening power of the Bible, though so many of its best and highest meanings have been veiled and perverted by such gross misunderstandings, and though there never have been lacking those who have used it to bolster wrong, to put the brakes on the wheels of progress, to gag the complaints of the trampled, and to throw all the weight of its authority against the advance of science and every attempt at reform. What would it not have done had its spirit always been rightly caught, and had it been used only for the ends that God approves!

And what is thus to be said as to nations is to be said also, with equal truth, of individuals; — is true of nations only because antecedently true of individuals. How does society improve except as the men and women composing it are first affected and improved? Far too easy, it must be conceded, it is to find those who profess to believe the Bible, and who read it more or less, whose lives give little

evidence of its elevating or sanctifying power. But admitting all that must be admitted on account of such, is it not true, the world over, that, other things being equal, those most familiar with the Bible and most under its legitimate influence, are of all people the best and happiest — most elevated in their tastes, broadest and tenderest in their sympathies, stanchest in their virtue, richest in their experience? Speaking of the rule, is it not true that as a man or woman renounces or neglects the Bible, life is yielded to material or earthly uses, — that the light of God's face and of the heavenly inheritance fades out of it, — that there is a deadening of spiritual consciousness and sensibility, — that the eye loses its upward look, and character its divine flavor? Who will answer, Nay, to these questions? Centuries ago, the Psalmist said, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy Word. . . . I will never forget Thy precepts: for with them Thou hast quickened me" (Psa. cxix. 9, 93). And what he said, having only a portion of what we have as the Old Scriptures, we may far more emphatically say, having what now constitutes the Bible, with all the treasures of the New added to the Old. There is no moral counsellor, or guide, like it; and outside its pages, there is nothing that *can* quicken souls. Most persons are familiar with the story of the deist, who, after publicly denouncing the Bible as undeserving of confidence, was found at home instructing his child from the New Testament, and who, on being arraigned for his inconsistency, frankly confessed that, desiring to teach the child morality, he knew not where else to find such morality as in the Bible. I knew a similar case. A relative of mine — an estimable man, but an unbeliever in Christianity, and at one time the blankest atheist I ever met, had a son about to go from home, to be thrown into numerous temptations. He naturally desired to shield and strengthen him to the utmost: and what did he do? Unbeliever though he was, he put a Bible into the young man's trunk, having first written in it to this effect, — "I will not now debate who wrote this book. It is certainly full of valuable instruction, whatever the source from which it came. Read it, my son, and try to follow its counsels. If

you do, whatever your temptations, I am sure you will be a virtuous man." What testimony this to the important relations which the Bible holds to our moral welfare! *Grant all that infidelity alleges against it, and it still remains the one book essential beyond all others to our moral culture and spiritual satisfaction.* Search the world, and we find that the noblest character flowers only out of roots which the Bible has watered; and when sorrow comes, when loved ones die, when suffering is to be endured, when death is to be met, how dark are the glooms which fall about the heart which the Bible has not illumined! how full of anguish the grief which knows nothing of the Bible's consolations! how uneasy the bed where the Bible ministers not to the soul! how terrible the grave into which the Bible sheds no sunshine, and across which beams none of the radiance of the Immortality it discloses!

These things, then, being so, who that has any regard to his own interests, or the interests of his Church, or the wider interests of the country and the world, can be indifferent to them? This, unfortunately, is not a Bible-reading age. There is so much other reading, and so many other calls are making their exactions on thought and time, and, on the part of many, there is such an indifference to the Bible, or such a self-complacency inducing the feeling that they have no need of it, that the Book is probably now more neglected than at any period since it was put by Protestantism and the printing-press into the people's hands. Not that there is any considerable abatement of respect for it, or of faith in it. Despite all that infidelity and a pseudo-science are, openly or covertly, doing to dethrone it, perhaps it was never more generally regarded as a Book somehow from God than to-day. Comparatively few intelligent families are willingly destitute of it in some form, while numberless costly illustrated and gilded editions, specimens of which meet us in parlors and elsewhere, indicate the reverence in which it is still popularly held. But it is not correspondingly read — except in sickness and sorrow and peculiar crises of experience. What is the result? From a neglect of the Bible, come the materialism, the mammon-worship, the spiritual emptiness and ignobleness, the prac-

tical infidelity, so much of which we see. From a neglect of the Bible, come to a large extent the prevalent unsettledness and vacillation of opinion, the readiness to be captivated by novelties, and the extravagances and religious crudities of all sorts which so easily find disciples. Especially is it on account of a neglect of the Bible in homes and by firesides that so many youth are growing up with so little religious knowledge and so little preparation for life, to be by and by turned adrift, with no fixed ideas, "tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine." How many people, of any religious convictions, are in the habit of carefully studying, or even of attentively reading, the Bible? How many do not put it aside for other reading — perhaps even on the Sabbath, for novels, flashy magazines, or Sunday papers? How many young men, or young women, make it a point to read it every day, or every week? How many parents do this, with their families, or by themselves? How many children are carefully and reverently trained to the practice?

No Christians can afford to be unconcerned in respect to this subject. But it has special claims upon us. *The Bible is a Universalist book.* Not only, therefore, has it moré spiritual wealth and nutriment for us than for our friends who fail to see its real meaning, but it is our fortress and strength, upon an intelligent use of which the future of our Faith and our Church depends. True, the result we affirm is reached through a variety of paths, and, the moral constitution of the universe being granted, is hinted, or necessitated, all the facts being duly considered, start where we will. Common sense suggests it. Nature in its pervading spirit prophesies it. Every human affection yearns for it. Every human sympathy protests against anything less broad, or inclusive. Reason, conscience, every moral instinct, unperverted, points towards it. Every perfection of God, His existence being admitted, — every spiritual faculty or possibility of man, — every principle in morals, — every axiom in science is an argument for it. As the consequence, faith in this result is variously cherished — with Christ and without him; on the authority of the Bible and independent of it; in connection with 'evangelical' opinions and as a part of

our harmonious theology; as an Instinct, as a Sentiment, as a Philosophy, as a Religion. But while this is true, and though every tendency of religious thought and opinion is in our direction, we have no hold upon the Future as a Church except by the force of the Bible, giving us Universalism as a religion. Whatever intimations, or confirmations, of it from other sources there may be, it is by the testimony of the Bible alone that we, or anybody, can be absolutely certified that Universalism is true. Only as a Bible doctrine, buttressed everywhere by a "thus-saith-the-Lord," can it be most unanswerably established. And except as its believers constantly make the Bible their study and reliance, they can never to best effect be prepared to give an answer to every one that asketh, nor can our Zion be most vital in itself, or most thoroughly equipped for its most desirable triumphs. The one great obstacle in our way is the mistaken impression that the Bible is against us. Correct this idea, and with everything else already in our favor, the field, of course, is ours. To secure this correction, by the ability to expound the Scriptures which thorough personal study and familiarity with them alone can give, should, therefore, be henceforth one of the leading purposes of all who call themselves Universalists. Holiness of life, attesting the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, should be our first aim. Then, for our own sake and for the sake of our truth and our Church, we should make the Bible the fountain from which we incessantly draw, that we may get the personal instruction and help which it is its exclusive province to impart, and that we may thus be prepared to edify and convince others, meeting their Bible arguments with better and stronger Bible arguments, and showing that not only do all other arguments array themselves on the side of Universalism, but that the Bible, from first to last, chants the grand anthem of a complete redemption.

The time was when Universalists were pre-eminently a Bible reading people, having a greater familiarity with the whole Bible than any others, and proportionally better able to do valiant Bible battle for their faith. Then the most unlettered Universalist was more entirely at home in the

closest hand-to-hand Bible argument than the rabbis and doctors of the dominant sects. Not the elders simply, but the young men and young women — boys and girls, sometimes — could vindicate the harmony of the Scriptures, by turning to the context of passages cited against us, and satisfactorily explaining their meaning. Our stripling Davids often put Goliaths to flight. But, though there is probably as much reading of the Bible among us as among the average of other churches, it is to be feared that this pre-eminence is no longer ours, and that our young people particularly are coming forward without that acquaintance with the Bible needful to their own most intelligent faith, or to the satisfactory defence of their opinions. Young people not unfrequently ask me, How are such and such passages to be understood, and what texts can I quote against the other side? — to whom my invariable reply, after such information as the moment allows, is, Study the Bible for yourself, and see. There is reason, doubtless, for the change thus noted. Those former days were days when every Universalist was a sort of Ishmael, and was expected to go armed, ready at any moment to receive and repel an assault. The policy of the opposition has now changed. Universalism, for the most part, is ignored. A partial truce, if not entire peace, has been proclaimed. There is, naturally, among us no such eagerness to prepare for fight. The arts of war decline in time of peace — or prolonged truce. Muskets become rusty, and swords lie unused in their sheaths. And it being forgotten that the Bible is not only the sword of the spirit, but the bread of life, and that, however one may cease to use it for fight, he must still use it for spiritual sustenance and strength, it has fallen into the comparative neglect spoken of. But we are putting our personal spiritual life and all that our Church stands for every day in peril so long as this neglect continues, and the time has fully come for a New Departure, committing us to the habits of Bible study herein urged — not for purposes of controversy, but for the far higher purposes of Christian culture and Christian effectiveness. Do what else we may, we can build on the solid rock, and accomplish the best work either for ourselves, or

for Christ and his Church in the awakening and salvation of souls, only as we build on the Bible, making it the ground of our assurance and the means of our power.

And then, think of our children. Who of us does not desire that they shall grow up, rooted in right principles, and supplied with all the materials for the noblest and happiest living? But how is this to be, except as they are educated to love, and read and understand the Bible? Moreover, they are our recruits for the army of Christ; those who are to bear aloft the banner of our faith, and take up and carry forward whatever good work we begin — if our Church is to live and grow. But how are they to be and do what is thus implied, if they are not duly trained in a knowledge of the Bible, and accustomed to draw nutriment and inspiration from it? If we neglect them in this respect, shall we be surprised if they fall away from us into the current of popular sects and traditional theologies, or, far worse, miss their way in life, and fall into moral waste? "If Universalists sleep," once said good old 'Father' Balfour, "and allow their children to sleep with them, it is easy to see what work is preparing for the next generation. They ought to see to it that Universalists in name be also Christians, able and willing to defend from the Scriptures what they believe. There can be no safety from controversy until Christians are correctly and generally instructed in the Bible, for so long as ignorance of it prevails, there will always be those who will impose on the ignorant" — and, he might have added, lead astray the unwary. There is a meaning in these words of the dear old patriarch, to which no Universalist should fail to give heed.

The Bible, indeed, is to be studied by us, or taught to others, in no narrow, dogmatic, or merely sectarian spirit. We want no idolatry of the Bible. We are not to be bigots, — though better bigotry than latitudinarianism and indifference; nor are we to do anything to make others bigots. We are not to look on the Bible as God's only revelation, — only as His most distinct and authoritative revelation. We are never to go to it, to put a meaning into it, — only to get its meaning out of it. Especially are we never

to forget that the Bible is not to be found in texts, sewed together like patchwork, or repeated as a parrot jingles what it has learned. *The meaning of the Bible is the Bible,* — not its mere letter. And one who constantly studies to reach the spirit of the Bible pays it far higher reverence than one who thinks only of its language, and deals with its words as a child deals with its bits of calico, or painted glass: — just as he is the Bible preacher who is most anxious, not to quote texts, or to say what he says in Bible terms, but to unfold Bible thought and preach Bible truth.

There are those who would have us believe that the Bible is to pass away from the authoritative place it has held, — as there are those who are fearing that it will suffer harm from the attacks made upon it. Pass away! Suffer harm! As well might one talk of the North Star's passing away from its place in the heavens, or of its suffering harm because a telescope is occasionally levelled at it. The Bible is a necessity and a fact, buttressed as well as demanded by every moral and religious need of the human soul. It is no gourd that grew up yesterday. It is the legacy of ages. It comes down to us, portions of it, from periods more remote than are reported by any other written page. It has seen empires rise and fall, and become forgotten. It has seen splendid cities built, whose very places have been lost to human recognition. Nor has it thus survived because it has had no enmity, or assaults, to encounter. It has had battles to fight that *were* battles — battles with learning, and superstition, and cunning, and ignorance; battles, especially, as one has well expressed it, "with men of culture, shrewdness, and force, compared with whom most of those who now assail it are, in every respect save a reckless daring, mere Lilliputians in presence of the men of Brobdignag." The Alleghanies will not be moved at present, however children may pelt them with pebbles, or discharge their mimic cannon against them, nor even though men should be found to vote them only so much vapor, or to pass wise resolves that they are nothing but sand. There they are; — and there, doubtless, however a stone may be occasionally hacked from their sides, they will stand, to invite generations yet unborn to the refresh-

ment of their breezes, and to the sublime beauty of the scenery they present, and to enrich those who mine them with the inexhaustible stores of wealth God has provided in them. And so with the Bible. Here and there, there may be those captivated by a pretentious philosophy, or led away by doubt and a presumptuous egoism, or jumping in the name of science to unwarranted conclusions, who may renounce their faith in it; and in the progress of criticism, here and there an interpolation may be discovered, and an excrescence be cut off. But so long as it can point to the civilization it has reared and vitalized, — so long as it has an advocate and witness in every necessity of our nature, pleading for its satisfactions, — so long as it fills the place in its relations to the life of souls and the progress of the world which it always has filled, and which it alone can fill, *the Bible will stand* — the record of God's living Word; the store-house of the unspeakable riches of His grace and truth; the lens through which light from Heaven shines upon us; the perpetual source of inspiration and redeeming power.

The dear old Bible! so consecrated as the gift of God, and as the memorial of prophets and apostles through whom He has spoken, — so hallowed by all the associations and uses of ages, — so fragrant with the aroma of the heroic and saintly lives it has formed and fed, — so anointed with the tears of sufferers it has sustained and soothed, and with the blood of martyrs who have folded it to their bosoms, and gone to the rack and the stake in its behalf, — the Book out of which have come the doctrine of human rights and every principle of free government, — from which Sorrow has drank, and been comforted, — into which Bereavement has looked, and seen the light that never grows dim, and read the promise of re-union, — to which Sin has come, and been cleansed, — against which the tempted have leaned, and found strength, and clasping which the dying have gone down into the dark valley, walking in the radiance of an Immortal Life! — oh, fathers and mothers, — oh, young men and maidens, — oh, children, lambs in the flock of the Good Shepherd whose Gospel it brings us, shall it not be dear to us? Will we not carry it

closer than ever before to our hearts, and, feeling the life of God pulsating through it, seek to take into our inmost being all that it aims to communicate, that we may be daily wiser and stronger and more efficient for Christian Work, as well as richer in all sweet and blessed experience? And will we not thus, one and all, give ourselves to the New Departure herein pleaded for, that, because of our increased study and knowledge of the Bible, our truth may shine out more and more as indeed the very doctrine of its sacred pages, and our Church, irresistible in the demonstration of the Spirit thus imparted, and vivified by an increasing spirituality and consecration, become the living and mighty instrument of God for the work He has appointed it?

CHAPTER XII.

PRAYER.

It was remarked in our second chapter that we are not a praying people, in the sense in which this phrase is commonly employed; that is, that the custom of family, social, or stated private prayer, does not, to any considerable extent, prevail among us, for the reason that there is no prevailing sense of duty in these directions. I should be heartily glad if the facts were otherwise; but no one familiar with our history will venture to say that the statement is not true. Many causes have contributed to make it true, most of which have been sufficiently set forth in preceding pages, especially in our Survey of the Field, and in the opening of the chapter on Experimental Religion. Prayer is one of the conditions and helps of experimental religion. It naturally shared, therefore, in the cheapening and neglect of this whole side of the Christian life consequent upon the disgust of our fathers at the pietistic cant and formalism of their time, and their inevitable reaction from them. Nor should it fail to be noted in this connection that, so constantly appealing to reason as for so many years we were, in our battle against the creeds, the habit into which we thus fell of rationalizing and philosophizing about everything led to a much too exclusively intellectual interpretation of religion, and particularly to speculations as to *how* prayer can be of use, not at all conducive to a prayerful frame of soul.

The result was precisely what might have been expected. With a view of God and an interpretation of Christianity which should have so stirred our hearts as to make us the most devout and prayerful of all Christians, we became, not undevout in the sense of indifference to religion, as religion was understood, but of all Christians probably, among those least given to any signs of religious emotion, and least ad-

dicted to the habit of prayer. Since I entered the ministry, it was not usual to find family prayer even in the homes of our ministers, while a family altar in a Universalist layman's home was a thing almost unheard of. The home in which I was reared — reared most tenderly and carefully — was a fair type of the best Universalist homes in this respect, my mother being a church-member, of devout mind and heart, and my father, though not a church-member, a most upright and scrupulously conscientious man, whom, to the last, nothing but serious illness could keep from his place at church, so long as he could get there. The children were trained to revere and read the Bible, to honor the Sabbath, to love and practise goodness, and to 'go to meeting' with punctilious regularity. But — saving that we children, in our earliest days, were taught to 'say our prayers' every night on going to our pillows — the voice of prayer was never heard in our home, except when the minister was with us to 'say grace' at table. And this, so far as my knowledge extended, was the universal rule among us as a people. Things have changed for the better with us, in this as in many other particulars, during these later years. We have grown much in devoutness of spirit, and in those habits of prayerfulness in which such a spirit most naturally expresses itself. We are yet, however, very far from having outgrown these early traditions and reactionary ideas — so that, were our census taken to-day, family altars would still be found much too rare, and more ministers' homes even would probably be reported as without a daily religious service than we should wish to see frankly stated to the world.

Without going into further detail to show why, then, I am confident no serious-minded person will dispute the assertion that, among our most pressing needs, is the need of a New Departure in respect to Prayer — i. e. it being conceded that prayer is ever of any real use. This, of course, is the previous question; but it is not a question with those who will read what is here written, or for whom it is specially intended. With them, the propriety of prayer — at least to some extent — is not open to debate. They would not see it dispensed with in our Sabbath services, at the

marriage altar, in the chamber of the sick, or at the burial of the dead. They not only recognize, but, if need be, would insist upon, its fitness on these and various special occasions. The basis on which this chapter proceeds is thus fully conceded. For if we should pray at all, it can only be because there is, for some reason, use and power in prayer. What mummery all praying is if so much as this be not true! And if there be use or power in praying at all, then the more we have of prayer of the right sort, under suitable circumstances, the larger the measure of use it will serve, — the greater the degree of power it will impart. Public prayer being well, then why not private prayer? If prayer in the church, why not in the home? if prayer in the pulpit, why not in the closet? if prayer on special occasions, why not as the habit of life? By so much as it is ever of service anywhere, in any way, they clearly are losers who neglect it. And if we have not heretofore sufficiently considered these things, — as it is certain we have not, and therefore have neglected to avail ourselves as we might have done of this means of spiritual culture and spiritual power, what can be plainer than that we should hereafter, in a New Departure, more largely and wisely employ it?

It must be confessed that the question, *How* is Prayer of use? is the perplexing one in respect to this subject. Because of the embarrassment this occasions them, some who try more or less to believe in prayer — speaking now without reference to church lines or names — do not believe nearly as strongly as they desire; while many others who would be glad to believe do not believe in it at all. The question, it is true, is one often asked in a trifling or sneering way by those without any sincerity or earnestness of thought concerning the subject, and who have no purpose except to throw contempt or ridicule upon it. So asked, the question deserves no reply. But others ask it with sincere concern; and it is a question that can scarcely fail to urge itself at some time upon every reflecting mind, however devout. God, the reasoning is, is unchangeable; the laws of nature are established; and neither He, in His feelings or plans, nor nature in its course, is to be affected or

changed by any pleadings or wishes of ours. How, then, can prayer find any actual hearing, or avail to bring us anything different from what we should have or experience without it? The question is one the complete answer of which involves elements necessarily beyond our comprehension. It belongs, moreover, to the metaphysical rather than to the practical side of the subject, and so does not fall properly within the particular design of these pages. And yet, considering the peculiar nature and importance of the point, I cannot forbear a few words of suggestion concerning it.

There is a view of the subject which seeks to avoid the difficulty this question, How? presents, by affecting to affirm the use of prayer, and at the same time alleging that it avails nothing with God, — only does us good on the same principle that religious meditation serves to strengthen, soothe and uplift us. This theory has found some advocates among us. But it seems to me — and I think I may say, to nearly all of us — a theory most unsatisfactory, and every way open to objection. No really devout mind can fail instinctively to shrink from it, and protest against it. Not only does it deny the Psalmist's statement that God heareth prayer, — i. e. hears in some sympathizing and responsive sense, — and equally deny Christ's repeated assurances to the same effect, but it makes prayer a travesty of devotion as actually as though there were no God. The essence of prayer, as *prayer*, is earnest and sincere asking, in the expectation of somehow receiving. But, on this theory, any such asking is impossible. This theory being true, one might as well kneel before a post or a brick wall, and talk to it, expecting it to bestow something, — might as well address himself to the name of God, believing there is no such Being, — as to call on God, expecting to receive anything from Him; Christ's precious words of promise, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," convey an implication that imposes a lie upon us; and every time God is addressed in the attitude and words of prayer, as if He heard and answered, a hollow pretence is acted that, were it not so impious, would justify a smile because it is so ludi-

crous. It is as if a child, wishing for some gift, should solemnly kneel and call on its mother to give, knowing that she is a thousand miles away, and can neither hear nor respond! Or, still more like perhaps, it is as if one, desiring to scale a mountain, should stand in a basket, trying to lift himself by going through the motions of pulling at a rope which he knows does not exist, but which he plays is dangling from the sky and fastened to the basket, all the while invoking the aid of some deaf or helpless friend! One at all realizing what such a view implies would find any heart or earnestness in prayer impossible, or if, going through its form in a momentary glow of devotional feeling, he should be suddenly struck with a becoming sense of what he was doing, would inevitably collapse in laughter, or sink to the ground, unspeakably shocked at the mockery in which he was engaged. "He that cometh to God," it is written, "must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him;" and there is, and can be, no *prayer* except as, in accordance with this, the soul calling on God feels that His ear is open to it, and that, in some way, its aspirations and requests will have response from Him.

What, then, *are* we to say to this question, How? In effect, as the subject presents itself to my thought, something like this: that neither God's unchangeability, nor the established course of nature, renders it either impossible, unreasonable, or improbable that blessings are given in answer to prayer which are not to be had without it. There are blessings which come to us without any use of means on our part; but there are others — among them, most of those that are of special importance — which we can have only through our own action. This is undeniably a part of the plan on which the world is governed, as is seen in the relation of sowing to reaping in the natural world, and in the equally apparent relation of effects to causes everywhere. Does our sowing of seed, or our active efforts towards any desirable end, involve or imply any change of God's plans or feelings, or any interruption of the order of nature, as a condition of the result we seek? Why, then, is any such change or interruption necessarily implied in the

supposition of answers to prayer? Rather, considering who and what God is in His relations to us, if there really be a God, is not every presumption in favor of the supposition that in this grand system of means, on our use of which life's best things depend, prayer is one? Spiritual blessings are the most legitimate objects of prayer; and it seems to me easy to see the connection between them and prayer as the means of obtaining them. And, though it may not be so easy to detect the precise connection between our petitions and what we pray for when we supplicate for the sick, the sinful, or the absent, or ask for health, or pray to be shielded from danger, or to be prospered in our undertakings, it is not difficult to conceive that God may have so arranged the possible relations and dependence of events as to be able to respond to such prayers when earnestly and believingly offered, without any change of feeling, or any violence to nature, or His own wise ways.

This subject, unfortunately, is one concerning which thought is quite too much merely superficial and mechanical, in its conception of God and His methods. It is important that we should duly keep in mind the fact of man's freedom; but it is even more important that we should take care not to overlook or compromise the grander fact of God's freedom. Because this fact fails to be properly taken into account, there is, in the habits of thinking quite too widely prevalent touching this whole matter of God's connection with us, not a little virtual Atheism. We hear a great deal about the laws of nature, and the established chain of causation, and the inviolable order of things; and there are those who never weary in insisting that it is not at all probable that this machine-like fixity and succession of events ever has been, or ever will be, intermitted in answer to anybody's prayers. We have heard of the proposed 'test of prayer.' We have become familiar with the loud and confident loquacity of what calls itself 'Science,' about the superstition and folly of those who still cherish any faith in prayer, or its possible efficacy. And let it be confessed that, amidst much that offends and shocks, some things are said by those who indulge in these diversions which are worth considering. But, whatever the terms employed, —

whatever the point from which the debate or denunciation proceeds, what have we, when we get at the bottom of all these discussions and tirades, but this as their final substance and real meaning — that God, if there be a God, is, practically, the slave of His own appointments, or of co-ordinate 'natural laws,' because they everywhere master, restrain, or hedge Him in? If the despotically naturalistic, or 'scientific' view of the universe so pretentiously urged recognizes God at all as an actual element in human life, it is only remotely and indirectly. In effect, He is utterly excluded. No place is left for His vital presence, for the exercise of His instant and solicitous care, or for the play of His immediate mercy in our concerns. And what is this but a modified Atheism? Atheism only tells us that there is no God; and why might we not just as well go to this extent, so far as all our present or personal interests are involved, as to believe that if there be a God, He is nothing, immediately, to us, and has, directly, no hand in our affairs?

I will not here assume to speak for others; but for myself, I am free to say, my intellect and my affections alike revolt from such an approach to Atheism, in such an expulsion of God from our daily life and interests. I believe in Law, and see abundant occasion to thank God that what we call His laws are so uniform and reliable in their operations. But I believe in no Law paramount to Almighty God. Either He is above all Law, except the law of honor and right, or He is not God. I do not believe in a God whose hands are hampered, whose volitions are hindered, whose living presence is caged behind any Law, or any set of Laws, existing by His ordinance, or otherwise. The God to whom my reason conducts me, that my heart yearns for, and that Nature and Providence and the Bible, as I interpret them, give me, is — not a cold and distant Sovereign, who deals with me at second-hand, through the unsympathizing mechanism which He has set to running and then retired, but a Father, numbering the very hairs of my head; without whose notice not even a sparrow falls, and who, near me always, is constantly and tenderly immanent in my life and in all lives for good.

Laws, do you say? What, finally, are these 'laws of nature' of which we hear so much, and of which we should

never fail to make due account, — forces and processes independent of God, or the methods in which He works? "rigid statutes, or flexible expressions of the Infinite Will"? As it has been well asked, "What informs and controls them? Is it the mechanical obedience of springs and wheels and repulsive and attractive forces? or is it the instant and universal presence of Divine Intelligence, Love, and Power?" If the latter, then there is no such thing as a mechanical, general Providence, with a Deity withdrawn from Life, content to look on with folded hands and see the great clock-work go on as He has arranged and wound it up. All Providence is *special*, and God's relations to the world and to us are direct and immediate. He is "*instant* as well as *constant*" everywhere. The universe is vital with His presence. Planets move and systems revolve in the grasp of His hand, and the events of history and the experiences of life transpire in the sight of His eye, to be overruled and used as He sees best. Laws, in the sense of fixed methods, there are; order there is; but it is 'law and order' that, instead of excluding Him, only shows us what He is doing — where and how His all-pervading and marvellous energy ordinarily expends itself, admitting any other manifestation of His will and work whenever, for any reason, it may seem to Him good.

These observations are made with no idea of offering them as a thorough discussion of the question they touch, but simply by way of suggestion — to hint that a philosophical, and even 'scientific,' explanation *may* be given of the use of prayer, implying no change in God, or violent interruption of the course of nature. For if there be any force in these considerations — and how can there be a free, self-acting, immanent God unless there is force in them? — God, they show us, if He sees reason to do so, can "give direct answer to our prayer — that answer being, not a violation of, or a departure from, the laws of nature, — only one of the legitimate results and manifestations of these laws."

After all, however, our faith in prayer must rest, finally, on other than any grounds of mere reasoning, or it will not be very strong. Philosophize as we may, there are still

questions concerning it — as concerning numerous other facts, not only in religion, but in science and the phenomena of nature — easy to ask, but impossible of human answer. These other facts, however, are none the less accepted, though we cannot answer all possible questions concerning them. Who the less believes in God because, in so many respects, a curious and speculative reason searches in vain to find Him out? Or who the less concedes the reality of the rainbow, or the gorgeous scintillations of the aurora borealis, because every link in the chain of their causation cannot be mathematically described? It is, therefore, nothing to the discredit of prayer though we have to grant, as we must after all our theorizing about it, that its innermost philosophy belongs to the domain of infinite and not of finite thought, and that our confidence in its efficacy must rest, at last, on something firmer than any mere argument concerning it, and deeper than any ability of ours to explain it. In granting this, we simply say that prayer belongs in the same category as all these other facts, and that faith in it is not so much a matter of reason, or of science, as it is of intuition, experience and actual demonstration.

While, then, it is well for us to give some consideration to the question, *How* is prayer of use? it is not the part of wisdom for us to perplex ourselves, or to allow ourselves to be perplexed, with inquisitive speculations about it. It is enough that prayer *is* of use, and that by an innate impulse, like that which impels the child to cling to the protection of its mother, we are moved, particularly in every season of deepest need and of highest moral consciousness, to avail ourselves of it. Here is the impregnable basis for faith in prayer. Prayer, in some form, is an instinct of our nature. Every religious sentiment prompts it. Everything in the shape of religious instruction enjoins it. The Bible, especially, is full of injunctions, urging it as a duty, as well as of declarations and promises, assuring us of its power. Unless, then, our nature is mocking us by suggesting what is only a farce, and unless the Bible is dealing falsely with us, and all the noblest lives it records and that are elsewhere recorded are fitted only to deceive us, prayer is not simply an instinct, but a duty, a privilege and a means to important ends not otherwise to be attained.

On this basis we are to stand, "continuing instant in prayer," whatever the questions we can ask but cannot answer concerning it, assured that "the effectual, fervent prayer . . . availeth much." Much good is lost to us because of a too curious disposition to inquire and speculate about the *rationale* of things — as if one should stand before a rosebush, and decline to pluck a flower, or to enjoy the fragrance, until he can tell exactly how the flower grows, and how its perfume comes. It is so with many persons, particularly in this matter of prayer. As some one has well said, "Philosophy asks a reason for the efficacy of prayer, and, waiting for an answer, never prays at all. Religion, wiser, hears that God will be inquired of by us, thankfully bends the knee, and bears away the blessing." There are not lacking numerous facts which serve to show that prayer *may* avail, even in respect to the restoration of health, the relief of hunger, the conversion of the wayward, and the whole class of blessings to which these belong. John Murray's Life furnishes several incidents that point strongly in this direction ; and a multitude of examples of the same nature, and of great interest, might be gathered from the fields of history and biography. Nor, though some choose to sneer at it as a piece of charlatanry, is the case of George Müller, and the work he has done, without very serious claims on our consideration in this connection. Not to affirm anything positively in respect to this side of the subject, however, — for the reason, I am frank to confess, that it is not altogether clear to my own mind precisely how much is to be affirmed, — it is enough now to say that, as regards all our moral and spiritual interests, — as regards religious strength and growth and peace, and all that most concerns us as souls, — prayer is not only an irrepressible instinct in every hour of exposure, suffering, or grateful emotion, but has effectually demonstrated its use in the results that have followed it ever since man first poured his petitions into the ear of God.

Let it be admitted that there are those who pray who seem to be in no way benefited by their prayers. But saying the words of prayer is not praying. There are hypocrites in prayer, as in every other good thing. There are

those, too, who pray only prayers of custom, necessity, or form — not hypocritical prayers, but perfunctory prayers, in which there is no earnestness, no vitality, no soul, — mere drudgery in the way of spiritual exercise. We cannot tell, indeed, how much worse those would be who thus pray without becoming any better, if they did not pray after this poor fashion; but it is the one sufficient answer to all such seeming instances of the inutility of prayer, that it is the prayer, not of the hypocrite, or of the formalist, but of the devout and earnest soul, to which the promise is given, and the effect of which we must observe if we would test the use of prayer.

And, thus judged, what is the verdict concerning the efficacy of prayer? Who have been the world's noblest workers, — the world's most triumphant sufferers, — the world's grandest heroes, — the world's most robust and impressive examples of virtue? Who but those who have been made so by the helpful and uplifting power of prayer? And, through the ages, among all those who have prayed as a child throws itself upon the bosom of its mother, clasping God's hand, and reposing their heads on His breast in love and trust and holy communion, desiring His grace and blessing, where can one be found of whom it can be said, Here is a man or woman who derived no good from prayer? What would Abraham, or Moses, or Samuel, or David, or Isaiah have been without prayer? What would John, or Paul, or Peter have been without prayer? Without prayer, where would have been the character and achievements which we now venerate in any of the sainted souls who shine as suns and stars in the moral firmament of history? Nay, without prayer, how could he who stands before us in the life so beautiful and yet so sublime, towering so far above all merely human excellence, have been the Christ he was? It is to such examples that those should look who cite the fact that hypocrites and formalists pray, and seemingly pray in vain, to prove that it does no good to pray. These are God's demonstrations that there *is* good in earnest, real prayer; God's witnesses that whoever asks receives; the providential confirmations of His fidelity to His promise, that no soul sincerely seeking good from Him shall be turned away empty.

To these and similar examples, then, all who have any moral earnestness, desiring to grow better themselves, and to see the Church of Christ, of any and of all names, becoming mightier for its conflict with evil, should put themselves to school. Reasoning and speculating, the *theory* of the subject may not be as transparent to us, in its depths, as we would be glad to see it; but these examples make the *facts* undeniable and clear. Better than the most subtile philosophy, more convincing than the ablest argument, they are the practical proofs that it is not useless to pray. Prayer, they certify us, is the medium through which God comes nearest to us, pouring most of himself into our being. As the hymn well says, —

> "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, —
> The Christian's native air, —
> The watchword at the gate of death;
> He enters heaven by prayer."

Or, as another hymn says, —

> "Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;
> Prayer keeps the Christian's armor bright."

Prayer is the nutriment of faith; the inspiration to endeavor; the means of consolation in sorrow; the ladder of Jacob, on which we climb into higher light, into a riper character, into a sweeter peace. In proportion as prayer is neglected, religious interest decays; all the elements of Christian experience wither; its best resources fail. Worldliness supplants thoughtfulness and devotion. The richest graces of the Christian life languish. The lethargy of indifference steals over the soul. Spiritual death ensues, and there is necessarily an utter lack of spiritual power. On the other hand, in proportion as we pray, every moral purpose is strengthened. God's presence is felt. Christ's preciousness is understood. Immortality becomes more real. Every spiritual resource is augmented. Our faults and sins are mourned with more poignant feeling, and conquered in a completer victory. More and more, we are made vital with the life of God, and, in harmony with Him, attain on earth something of heaven.

True, we often ask for what we do not receive; and, as

often as we do, those who disparage prayer eagerly exclaim, There, see how futile all your praying is! But not so. With every prayer we offer, if we pray aright, whatever the special thing for which we plead, we pray for a clearer knowledge of God, for a deeper sense of His loving presence, for a trust and reconciliation more entire, for grace and fortitude to bear whatever may be appointed us, saying always, "Thy will, not ours, be done." Grant, then, that the specific thing for which we plead is not bestowed, — that the calamity or misfortune we would be spared comes, — that the good we crave is denied: if through our prayer, and because of it, we attain a higher frame of soul, becoming calmer, more self-possessed, stronger to bear the cross, or to pass through the trial, does not our prayer prove effectual, and vindicate its worth, notwithstanding? Though one request is denied, another — and, if we have faith in God, we must believe, that which, under the circumstances, is best for us — is granted. Thus it was with Christ. His whole life was a prayer, and the record tells us, especially, how he prayed and even agonized in Gethsemane. His sensitive nature shrank from the terrible ordeal before him, — from the buffetings of the judgment-hall and the tortures of the cross. And so he prayed, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Over and over again, he prayed that prayer. But it was not granted. The cup from which he so recoiled did not pass from him. For our sake, he drained it to its dregs. But was his prayer, therefore, in vain? Who will say so? God's will was done; and as it was done, through that prayer there came to the tried and shrinking soul of the sufferer a sense of God, and a serene submission to His will, which enabled him to take up his cross and go trustfully to his death, making the mount of agony the throne of triumph.

And so prayer always proves effectual, when offered in the right spirit — if not in one way, then in another. Standing at the entrance of some path of trial, which we shrink from entering, we may ask to be saved from the necessity of walking there; — bending above the bed of some dear child or friend, we may plead that the life so precious may

be continued ; — amidst our honorable struggles for success, we may ask God to prosper us ; — bowed with disease, racked with pain, suffering in poverty, we may pray for the relief we yearn for, and, as in Christ's case when he so besought that his cup might pass from him, our request may not be granted. But if, in that spirit of trust and submission which he exhibited, and which is of the very essence of all true prayer, our petitions have gone up to the Father, they shall bring us, though not *the* thing which was the burden of our request, yet such help and strength as will show that His ear is not closed, nor His hand withheld. Through that path of trial we shall be able to walk patient, resigned, serene. Above the cold form of the dear one we would have retained, we shall be aided to stand, and fold the cold hands across the breast as cold, and smooth the hair above the brow we have kissed, and take the last look at the face that has so often and so tenderly been pressed to ours, and through it all, though our eyes are full of tears and our heart is aching with the terrible sense of its loss, we shall see the light of heaven making the grave beautiful, and feel God's support, and rejoice in the grace that is sufficient for us. Amidst our disappointed plans and our wrecked hopes, we shall still look up, rejoicing that God is over all ; and, though languishing in sick rooms, and turning uneasily in our pain, we shall find that, through the sweetness of our converse with Him, God's ministering angels are visiting us, and that courage and trust are given to endure what we would escape, but cannot.

And *these*, and such as these, are *the* effectual answers to prayer, which make it most a privilege and best attest its use. It is permitted us to go to God in the freedom of filial confidence, asking for what we will, if we but ask in submission to His wise and holy pleasure ; but the blessings which enrich, enlarge, and fortify the soul, lifting us towards God and making us more perfectly His children — vigor of moral purpose ; the sense of nearness and acceptance ; the experience of Divine support ; strength in weakness ; comfort in the hour of affliction ; light in darkness ; victory over our hinderances and our sins, — the blessings which keep us in fresh and constant contact with spiritual realities, and thus

give us increasing power and unction from on high — *these* are the blessings most desirable, and which, sincerely offered, prayer never fails to bring. No matter how, or when, or where we pray, *if we truly pray*, down through the windows of heaven which our prayers, ascending, have opened, God will shed these gifts upon us, so proving the efficacy of prayer, according to the measure of our faith, the earnestness of our purpose, the submissiveness of our spirit, the continuousness of our supplications.

Profoundly convinced of the truth of these several statements, and as profoundly convinced, therefore, of the incalculable importance of this subject to all, and to none more than to us as individuals and as a Church, I urge it, with the intensest emphasis I can command, upon the serious consideration of every Universalist to whom these pages come. Are you, whose eyes are now resting on these words, a praying man or woman? If the head of a family, have you a family altar, at which, every day, God's word is read, and His name honored, and His love praised? If a father, or a mother, are you training your children to daily communion with God, and seeking thus to fill your home with the atmosphere of religious thoughtfulness and devotion? If a young man, or a young woman, are you realizing your exposures and your needs, and, every morning or evening, going to the Source of light and strength for the guidance and support you require? Young, middle-aged, or old, whatever your position or relations, have you your closet and your hour of prayer? And are you thus endeavoring to fulfil the deepest requirements of your own personal life, and, so far as your influence can go, to make our Church vital with the spiritual effluence that prayer alone invokes, and mighty with the power that only prayer can give? If so, pray on, growing more and more fervid and earnest. If not, let me plead with you, if you have any actual interest in religion, and wish to have more, — if on your conscience presses, or begins to press, any sense of your religious needs, or obligations, — if the story of Christ's life and death awakens any concern in your heart, and you have any love for him or his Gospel, or any desire to help on his kingdom in the conversion of souls, or in your own growth

— or in the growth of your children, if you have any — in his discipleship, feel what prayer is, and henceforth give yourself to it. If our Lord himself felt the need of prayer, and saw it important that he should use it as a means of furthering his kingdom, who of us is superior to the necessity which he thus confessed, or, avowing faith in the truth he taught, should be unwilling to employ the same means to the same great end?

Especially would I plead with those having children under their charge, to reflect upon this subject. We defraud our children of an important element in the preparation for life, when we fail to make prayer and every means of religious impression a part of their education. A thoughtful and sensitive child — now a young lady — some years ago read "Home Influence," and, talking with friends in presence of her parents about its story of the power of family prayer, supplemented by a consistent religious example, to chasten and hallow the lives of children, sadly said, "We have no such influence in *our* home, mother." Who can tell how much she was surprised and shocked at the contrast she thus noted, or how much was lost to her life because her home had been without this influence? Quite of another sort was the remark of a young woman — a wife and a mother — far away from the home of her childhood, who, writing on her birthday to her mother, said, "On every birthday that comes to me now away from you, I do so miss father's morning prayer, asking God's care over me for another year! It always gave me a sense of blessedness to carry through the year, and the feeling that God took me anew under His guiding hand." Can there be any doubt what family prayer had been as an element in her life? Or, with these two instances before us, — samples of numberless similar cases, — can there be any difference of opinion among thoughtful minds as to which did most for those in it — the home that had no influence of prayer, or the home that had? O, if every Universalist home could but have its altar, and every Universalist believer his or her closet and hours of prayer, and our whole Church could but be pervaded by the new life and the fruits of Divine communion which would thus come to us, what a kindling there would be among us,

and how the world would feel the glow and the impulse we should impart!

Let no one say that because

> "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
> Uttered, or unexpressed,"

no words, or set times, are necessary; that every good wish is praying; and that whoever, at any time, or anywhere, thinks of God, or is moved by a devout thought or feeling towards Him, prays sufficiently for all practical purposes. This, for the most part, is the talk of those who have little faith in prayer, or who seldom or never pray — as the like talk that we can worship anywhere as well as in the House of Worship comes usually from those who seldom or never worship at all. It is talk that has never helped anybody, but has made many a life prayerless, and many a soul empty, and many a church, or congregation, a corpse. True, God *can* be worshipped anywhere; but, as the rule, He is worshipped only by those who have nurtured themselves, or been nurtured by others, in the mood and habit of worshipping in the place consecrated to this purpose. So there *may* be prayer, or converse with God, without words; and some of the sweetest hours in every religious experience are those when, with no petition on the lips, — with scarcely a distinct thought, except the thought of God, in the mind, — one becomes absorbed in ecstatic communion with the Divine Father, as two hearts, with no need of words, sometimes interfuse themselves into each other, feeling the flow of a subtile and delicious sympathy that, in its supreme and electric blessedness, would rather be jarred and broken than helped by any language which speech could frame. But these are exceptional seasons, alike in the relations of hearts to each other, and in the relations of souls to God. Ordinarily, words are needed if friends, however much in sympathy, are to be put into communication; and by a similar necessity, if souls are to hold intercourse with God, and prayer is really and availingly to be made, there must be set times for it, and we must accustom ourselves to put our requests into fit and articulate speech. Christ gave us words, saying, "After this manner pray ye:" shall we

treat them as worthless? He put his own prayers into speech: are we more independent of it than he? He had his seasons for prayer: have we no occasion for what he thus required? No doubt he had his hours of exaltation and voiceless communion; but in this custom of spoken prayer, at stated times, as well as in the model he left, he indicated the law of necessity in the case. And it is for us to understand that the best results of prayer are not to be attained except as we comply with the conditions thus imposed, for the reason that we cannot otherwise best form the habit of prayer, nor most distinctly frame our thoughts and petitions into the mould of prayer.

As little does it avail for any one to say, I am diffident, or slow of speech, and shrink from attempting to lead in prayer, or find it impossible to command language, especially in the presence of others. No doubt there are those who can plead one or both of these statements with truth. But the difficulty, in any case, is rather imaginary than real. In this as in other things, facility, usually, comes with practice; and there are Books of Prayer within reach of all, while self-command and practice are being acquired. The most diffident, or the slowest of speech, can at least read a chapter in the Bible, or unite with others in reading it, and then either lead, or have some one else lead, in prayer, using a book. It is only the will to pray, one's self, or to institute family prayer, that is, under any circumstances, wanted. This determined, everything else will, in some way, easily follow. So in respect to the excuse, As we are situated, we cannot find a time for family prayer. If hearts hunger for prayer, the time will be found.

Prayer, it is true, does not fulfil all duty. Other things are important. Better a conscientious discharge of every moral obligation without prayer, so far as it is possible, than a life full of prayer and abounding in talk about religion, but empty of the evidence of a real regard for God or duty. Better homes in which the voice of prayer is never heard, if they are pervaded by a kindly and loving spirit, and a general endeavor to make them real homes by fidelity to every tender office, than homes with family prayer every night and morning, and filled with religious form and chatter, in which those who pray and profess to be devoted to religion make

everybody uncomfortable by a morose or fractious temper, and by a general irreligiousness of manner and spirit. I once had a teacher who opened school every morning with a Bible-lesson and prayer; and, frequently, hardly had he said, *Amen*, when he would angrily throw the Testament out of which he had just been reading, or something else near his hand, at some scholar whom, through his glasses while praying, he had seen inattentive or disorderly. Need it be said that his praying did not avail much to fill us with respect for religion? So praying, anywhere, is only a burlesque of religion, doing more against than it can do for it, if there be not with it a temper, a manner, a general influence in keeping with it, or at least a constant and manifest effort to put the substance of religion into character and daily life. But while all this is true as to the necessity of something besides prayer, it is also true that *neither by individuals, nor by a Church, are the best things to be attained except through prayer* — fervent, intelligent, consistent prayer. This is the lesson that all churches and multitudes of no church have need to learn, and that none have more occasion than we, — that few have so much as we, to learn. What the world wants of us — the destiny that God is proffering us — is, that we shall be the revolutionizing, regenerating, quickening Church of the Future, gathering into itself the choicest resources of spiritual influence, and sending out this influence for the salvation of our race. But we cannot be this except as we become more generally, and with increased fervor and unction, a praying people — with praying fathers and mothers in our homes; with praying superintendents and teachers in our Sunday-schools; with praying young men and young women in our congregations; with praying ministers and members in our churches.

Shall we not, then, have the New Departure we so much need in this respect? Preach about it, O brethren of the ministry. Talk about it, O teachers in the Sunday-school. Enforce it as alike a privilege and a duty, by word and by example, O believers all. Then shall a new day open for us, as, taking our New Departure, we become filled with a new impulse, and go forward with new energy, to larger and grander results.

CHAPTER XIII.

OUR MINISTRY.

Every army must have its leaders; and as are the leaders, so, as the rule, will the army be. The ministers of a church are its leaders; and no church, whatever else it may have, can be a live, enterprising, consecrated, growing church, except as it has live, enterprising, consecrated ministers, giving themselves in Christ's spirit to the furtherance of its growth, through the conversion and enlistment of souls. We have had many such ministers; and our history is fragrant with their names and the influence of their labors. As I trace these lines, the faces of some such whom I have known, and of others who preceded them, shine out of the Past, and come clustering, a sacred and glorious 'cloud of witnesses,' about me: — Turner, Richards, and Hosea Ballou; dear, saintly Dr. Ballou, one of the simplest, sweetest, grandest souls that ever walked the earth; Sebastian Streeter, S. R. Smith, and Otis Skinner; Hanscom, so full of zeal and so early called; Henry Bacon, John Boyden, and James W. Putnam — these are but part of the company. And only a little while ago, after a long and weary struggle with disease, another passed on to these faithful ones — Franklin Samuel Bliss, a man of no brilliant gifts, or conspicuous position, and of many bodily infirmities; but a man of faith and prayer, who, in spite of numerous physical impediments, which most persons would have regarded as insuperable, gave himself to Christ, and the endeavor to lead others to him, with a sincerity and unction so impressive and a consecration so entire, — and loved our whole Church with a heart so large and warm, and a response so ready, — and supplemented all with a life so penetrated with the spirit and power of our faith, and therefore so pure and Christian, that his very feebleness became mighty, and the fields in which he toiled bore fruit in spiritual har-

vests which will long attest how effectually he wrought. Devoted and sainted one! with what pathos come to us who knew him and the limitations by which he was hindered, those words among his last, as he thought of the work God had for him to do on the other side, "I shall not be deaf or blind in heaven; no weakness, no weariness there." Rather a thousand times would I choose the record of this humble, unpretending, comparatively obscure servant of the Lord, as it stands in God's reckonings, than that of many another man of far greater gifts and more commanding power and wider fame, but without his love for Christ and his zeal for souls. And we have had not a few such. The annals of any church may be searched in vain for ministers more apostolic, heroic, or saintly, or more worthy to be held up as models, than those who have thus honored our ministry, and helped to command respect and win success for our cause.

But like others, we have had far too many of quite another class. Singularly fortunate we have been, considering our circumstances, and how our ministry has been recruited, in respect to the immoralities which have so stained and stigmatized the ministerial profession of other names. But while we have had great cause for thanksgiving in this respect, though our skirts have not been altogether clear, what a motley assemblage we should have, were we to cull out from those who, nominally or really among our ministers, have been unsuited to the work — say during the last forty years! Imagine the gathering, grouped according to 'gifts' and character! — here, those interested solely in the negative or argumentative side of our faith, with no taste or care for its moral and spiritual meanings or applications, — intent only on controversy; here, adventurers 'taking up' the ministry simply as a means to 'get a living,' with no heart or conscience in it; here, men adrift, lodging for a time in our pulpits, as logs or chips, floating in a stream, lodge on the bank, or against a rock, until some eddy, or some fresh movement of the waters, chances to displace and send them farther on; here, minds undisciplined, often unbalanced, restless, crotchety, impracticable; here, rattle-brained lovers of novelty and excitement, catch-

ing at every fresh sensation, and at length whirled off by the latest; here, pieces of inflamed, or pompous, self-conceit, enacting the part of the frog in the fable, or incessantly fretting, because denied appreciation; here, hot-heads, impetuous, frothy, unreasonable, usually unscrupulous; here, those whose perpetual thought has been of self, and whose entire lives have turned upon some personal, or local, pivot, with no breadth of view, with no public spirit, with no devotion to our Church or our cause as a whole, caring only for the patch of ground their feet have covered, or their hoe has tilled, and anxious exclusively for what they were themselves somehow to get out of it; here, schismatics, or latitudinarians, always riding some hobby, or protesting against rules, or advocating license under the name of freedom, and caring only for a nominal fellowship that they might the better serve their factious, noisy, litigious, or personal ends; here, the listless and indifferent, insensible to all appeals, though every appeal might be blown through Gabriel's trumpet, and indisposed to lift a finger in the way of co-operation, whatever the necessities demanding it; and here, finally, the drones, ignoramuses, do-nothings, 'settling' every year, and occupying any field only to exhaust it. A motley company, indeed! — greatly differing as to ability and the shadings of motives and purpose, or no-purpose, but having, most of them, these two things in common, viz., an utter lack of any thorough religious awakening or experience, and an absence of any real sympathy with the ministry, or any central, absorbing consecration to it.

Let no one suppose that I thus refer to those who have been in our ministry without being fitted for it, as if they ever had been, or — so far as we now have them — are, peculiar to us. The ministry of every church shows such. But without entering into comparisons, or debating whether we are more or less unfortunate than others in this particular, all having any familiarity with the facts will agree that we have sorely suffered on this account. Who of us, of any length of service, has not known numerous specimens of every one of the groups described, and seen the mischief they have done? And no one who has had any-

thing like a personal acquaintance with those who have been enrolled in our "Register" since its first publication, can look through the successive issues and draw a pen across the names of those who should never have entered a pulpit, or who, if of right ability and character in other respects, have been lazy and irresponsive occupants of it, without finding occasion for surprise and thanksgiving that we are as strong and prosperous as we are.

And yet, how could it well have been otherwise than it has been with us in this regard? A new movement as ours was, bursting out of the heart and unlettered common-sense of the people, — led almost exclusively by uneducated men, — making fighting, of necessity, its chief business, — without schools or colleges, — without organization, — with crude and insufficient rules of fellowship and discipline, — so needing ministers and so ambitious for a show of increasing numbers, — with the doors into our ministry open to every stripling, or talker, however unripe, or unqualified, who had walked through a preacher's 'study,' or who was moved by any motive to preach, it is only a matter of amazement that we have had so many excellent and tolerable ministers as we have, and a number no larger of the other description. Since I cannot properly mention others as examples, may I be excused for illustrating how entrance was had to our ministry by referring to my own case? I was 'fellowshipped' in June, 1836, just before I was twenty years old. I had left a very poor town-school — strangely called 'High' — a few months before I was seventeen, with a meagre smattering of Latin and Greek and several other things, with a mind totally undisciplined, and thoroughly knowing nothing beyond the rudimentary studies. From March to November, 1833, as many another poor lad has done, having his own way to make, I was 'prospecting' for 'something to do,' hardly taking a book in my hand, when Providence opened the way for me to become a student in a Law Office, far away from my home. I accepted it at once because nothing else so desirable offered, though it had been my determination, from very early boyhood, to make the ministry my life-work. I found myself amidst very delightful associations, but

where I had to hold my Universalism by a constant battle. Here, therefore, attending, for the most part, only 'the orthodox meeting,' and thrown upon my own resources, I obtained for the first time anything like discipline and logical coherence in my religious thinking. Returning to my home in the summer of 1835, I soon after began, as it was called, 'to study' with Rev. T. F. King, the Portsmouth pastor: — that is, he gave me Mosheim, and subsequently one volume of Horne, to read, and after a few weeks told me I "had better write a sermon." That was all! Not a lesson recited, not a question asked, not a hint offered, touching what I was to do. Besides the books mentioned — saying nothing of a great deal of other reading I had done, not at all bearing on my chosen work, and much of it ruinously dissipating to all taste or relish for solid reading — I had read the "Trumpet" from its commencement, — had read a few pamphlet sermons, and possibly half a dozen other books relating to theology, including Paley's "Theology" and "Evidences." This, with some superficial acquaintance with the Bible, was my preparation for the ministry! And so unprepared, I was sent out with the formal indorsement of the New Hampshire Convention, as entitled to full confidence as a minister — without a single inquiry as to personal experience, as to reading or habits of study, as to opinions, purpose, or anything else! I have always felt that it was by the special grace of God that I was kept from shaming the ministry and our cause by my utter unfitness — for a youth more immature in all essentials, or less prepared in every particular for the grave responsibilities I assumed, save that I looked considerably older than I was, and had a sincere desire to live correctly and to do good, it would be difficult to find: a fact which I unconsciously symbolized, let me add, by choosing a coat of *very green, thin stuff* for that first summer's wear!

And what was thus illustrated in my case was the rule, even down to a much later period than 1836. Of course, I do not intend to represent that only those thus immature, or unprepared, came into our ministry. There were occasionally those of riper years and of maturer and better-furnished minds. But the rule was about as shown in the

illustration. Is it surprising that, as the consequence, we should have had many, not only totally unfit to enter, but equally unfit or unable to stay in our ministry? Let God be praised, that out of such material, He was able to sift so much passable wheat, besides some that was a great deal more than passable; and that, in spite of all the risks thus incurred, we have had a ministry on the whole so able and so Christian as it has been. Ah, saying nothing of ability, if all our ministers had been in other respects what they might have been, with the spirit of Dr. Ballou, and John Boyden, and our more recently departed brother, Bliss, what a different record we should have made! what a wider and profounder work we should have done! what a differently equipped Church we should now be!

Has not the time come, as we enter upon our second century, for a New Departure in this regard, aiming at a ministry which, as far as possible, bating inevitable human foibles and imperfections, shall be composed only of those possessed of such a spirit? Can we not henceforth have a ministry, all of whom shall be not only trained men, but men of conscience, men of heart, men of consecrated will, men of profound and earnest religious life, men of enthusiasm and enterprise in respect to the conversion of souls and the Christian enlargement and progress of our Church? I approach this point with much hesitation. I am aware how delicate the ground is, and I shrink from saying all that is in my thought lest I be suspected of assuming some special fitness warranting me to say it. Let it be understood that I assume no such thing, and that I take fully to myself all that I venture to suggest to others, better aware than anybody else how far I fall below my own ideals. But I feel that there are some particulars in which a change for the better in our ministry is imperatively demanded, as vital to our welfare, and that some one should be frank and brave enough to utter the words that should be said, even at the risk of receiving the old rebuke, "Physician, heal thyself." So I speak.

As to the literary and theological acquirements requisite for entrance into our ministry, there is, happily, an increasing conviction in the right direction. Years ago it was a

question much debated whether these acquirements were really essential, and there was a widespread feeling that they were not. But this question was substantially disposed of in the establishment of our first theological school. There are still considerable numbers, it is true, who think it pushing the matter too far to insist upon these conditions as in every instance indispensable. We must not be too strenuous or particular, these friends say. We need ministers, and it is wrong to discourage or turn away any good man of decent ability who is disposed to preach, simply because he lacks scholastic training. Those with no such training had formerly free access to our pulpits, and many of them have made useful — some of them eminent — ministers. Why not bid such equally welcome now, at the same time that we carefully foster our theological schools, and do all we can to elevate our ministry through them?

Not a little sympathy would be found among us, probably, with the view which thus argues; and occasionally one does even yet enter on our ministerial work with much the old lack of suitable preparation. But the growing sentiment, alike of our ministers and people, it is fortunate, is decidedly against this view, and in favor of insisting upon the best possible training. And this mainly for three reasons: First, because circumstances have so changed, and the general tone of culture and intelligence so improved, that such unripe and illy-furnished ministers as many of us were, and such productions as we used to give under the name of sermons, thirty-five or forty years ago, would not be tolerated now, or could be tolerated only to reflect discredit on all concerned. It is no small thing that the pulpit in these days has to do; and if it is to hold its place, and maintain its power against all that is seeking to supplant it, or that the drift of events is tending to put into rivalry with it, there must be an end of admitting into it what the Country Parson once so felicitously described as 'veal,' or any but thoroughly prepared men. No pulpit can command the respect of intelligent minds, or do most for those who listen to it, unless it is at least fully up to the best average of existing thought and attainments; and of all churches, we can least afford to have our pulpit in any particular below the

highest and latest demand of the hour. Second, because to admit any to our ministry in an abatement of the preparatory conditions, is so far to lower its standard and character as a whole, tearing down with one hand what we are trying to build up with the other, and saying in effect, that though schools and what schools can give are very well, they are in no essential respect important, and that, for our purposes, we do not care to be understood to think them necessary. And third, because it is no kindness, but, on the contrary, a great unkindness and injustice, to any man in times like these to encourage or allow him to take upon himself the exactions of the ministry except after the most careful preparation. Those who have in any measure succeeded without such previous training have done so at immense disadvantage, constantly hampered and impeded by their original deficiencies, or by the necessity of going over ground, or making up attainments, with which they should have been familiar in the outset; and every such man has reasons, which only he and those of like experience can fully appreciate, for using every influence he can properly command to deter those so inclined from entering any ministry in a similar condition of unpreparedness. The best preparation will be found meagre enough for the highest usefulness. Nor is it a consideration to be overlooked, that the more rigorous the training intellectually and theologically insisted on, the more effectually will the ministry be guarded against the flightiness and eccentricities, the crudities, and all the various results of unbalanced and undisciplined minds, from which we have suffered so severely.

We want ministers, it is true; but we want only those who will serve the truth and honor themselves, — not those who will fail in either of these respects. For this reason, it is to be hoped that the present tendency of feeling and requirement will go on, more and more elevating the standard of our ministry and the indispensable conditions of entrance into it. Ours is a great cause, destined, if there be not unpardonable blundering or unfaithfulness somewhere, to be the leading religious movement of the world. God calls us to see that it is not intrusted to the keeping of little or incompetent hands. There was a time in the history of our

Church, as in the history of most churches, and of Christianity itself, when "the foolish things of the world were chosen to confound the wise, and the weak things to confound the mighty, and base things, and things despised, and things that were not, to bring to naught things that were." There seems to be a time in all such great reforms and spiritual awakenings when God's word is to them as of old to Zerubbabel, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." But though such may be their beginnings, if they are to proceed and to triumph, they must, while none the less invoking the Spirit of God, enlist quite other, and more effective, human instruments. Christianity was first preached by fishermen; but what would it now be, had it been preached only by such without the special help that was given them? The time is coming, I believe, in the subsidence of the present consuming fever of worldliness, when our young men will not be so generally enticed as now into mammon worship and the secular pursuits and professions, and when the pulpit will duly assert its claims, and attract its share of the best brain and heart. Then the character and influence of the ministry that *is* in any church will do much to attract and determine the ministry which *shall be;* and if we desire to have stout, healthy, thoroughly furnished, magnetic men in our pulpits, to attract and mould others like them, and to wield a power, by virtue of what they *are*, commensurate with the grandeur and worth of the truth they have, we cannot too soon begin to close the door against all who are not such. For myself, I am frank to say, taught by almost forty years' observation what harm comes to a church so far as it has ministers who are not true and manly men, I would admit no moral or intellectual weakling to our ministry; no stripling in years; no man of infirm will or vacillating purpose; no nerveless, forceless, inoffensive man, destitute of energy, pluck, or propelling power. The ministry has had brave, strong men, many of them; and of such, as has been intimated, our ministry has had its fair proportion. But there has been altogether too much of the idea that any 'pious' or goodish young man, without vim or push, shrinking from the hard battle of life, or for any reason unfitted to make his way in the world in

any 'more practical calling,' furnishes good enough material for the ministry, or can most appropriately dispose of himself in it. It is time that this idea were abandoned. If any profession should have picked men, it is the ministry; and of all men, the minister should be the last to be composed of stuff that cannot make its way in any other calling. The best, the strongest, the most energetic, the most practically sagacious minds find use for all they are, or can be, in this work; and this is becoming every year more and more the fact.

And insisting, first, on the qualities thus indicated as essential, I would — because taught by painful experience what penalties one incurs by entering the ministry without due training — equally insist that no man, whatever else he may be, shall receive our fellowship without at least *a full course* in some theological school with a first-class curriculum, and that these partial courses, which give so many the name of a school without giving them what the school is designed to insure, must be forbidden, and wholly cease. The man who desires to be a minister of Christ looks to an office of grave importance, especially in these days; and he should be willing to pay the required price of waiting and study to attain it. Having paid this price, he can do more in ten years than he can in twenty, or perhaps in a whole lifetime, if he "climbs up some other way." If there are those who cannot pay this price, let them be content to be lay preachers, provisions for whom are now made among us, or give up the ministry altogether. Better a small ministry than a weak or an incompetent one; and better for any man that he be out of the ministry, in some honest and useful calling, than in it to be a drone or a cipher. For of all wrecks stranded on its beaches, not occasioned by serious moral offences, what wrecks has the world sadder, more useless, or more pitiable than those of men who, trying to be ministers, have succeeded only in being — nothing, and some of whom at last starve on the undeserved alms which they beg or sponge from the church they have never really served? Let us, for our part, as a Church, have done with encouraging, either directly or by toleration, those who can only be such. "Put none but Americans on guard to-night," it

used to be said Washington once ordered. Is it too much to hope that the time is coming when it will be one of the 'general orders' of our Church, that none but those prepared for the work shall be put into the watch-towers of our Zion, and when to say that a man is a Universalist minister will be the same as to say, that whatever he may be physically, he is a robust, large-hearted, vigorous-willed man, with a masculine brain, thoroughly equipped for doing God's work in a wise, practical, manly way?

But this is the least important side of the subject. Brain, and force, and thorough intellectual and theological training, indispensable as they are, avail nothing for the final purpose of the ministry, except as they are possessed and sanctified by something deeper and more experimental. This something deeper is the great thing after all, therefore; and coming now to this, summing up many particulars in the fewest possible general statements, there are *four* requisites, without any one of which, no man — be his qualifications in other respects what they may — should find it henceforth possible to enter our ministry.

I. The first is *faith*. This is the primary thing in the order of a distinctively Christian experience. It is equally fundamental among the conditions of Christian usefulness. Christ built his Church on the rock of his confessed Messiahship. Would he have sent out men to be his ministers who did not in this respect build with him — who denied or questioned what he so affirmed? Invariably his demand was, *Believe*, whether he was about to perform his works of healing, or to induct souls into his kingdom. And sent forth on this basis of Faith, the Apostles enforced the same demand. The burden of their preaching, and of the whole New Testament in this regard is well summed up in Paul's charge to the Colossians (ii. 6–8), "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and *stablished in the faith* as ye have been taught, *abounding therein* with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Our Church has from the first recognized

this primal necessity of faith, and alike its law and its usage are now unmistakably settled on this point. Both for ministers and organized bodies, "expressed assent to the Winchester Confession of Faith" is "essential" to our fellowship. Nor is there the remotest probability that this law will ever be repealed. The believing sentiment among us is too pronounced and universal for this. Our sole danger in this respect is, that through a loose and latitudinarian construction, our established standards may be made of none effect. Those familiar with our affairs need not be told that already, in some instances, these standards have been thus made of none effect, and that men have found entrance to our ministry alike against the letter and spirit of our 'Confession,' only sooner or later to make their unbelief manifest, and to become elements of discord and occasions of mischief wherever they have labored. It is against this that we need to guard. Our standards are right and sufficient. We have only to insist that they be honestly construed.

It is unfortunate that some minds are so constituted that they cannot see the limits to which all general axioms are subject, and that, laying hold of any such axiom, they are sure to carry it to extremes. Only on this account could there be any difference of opinion among sincere and thoughtful Christian people concerning this question of ministerial fellowship. Starting with the axiom that life, as a ground of confidence, is more than opinion, and adding to it the axiom that every man has a right to think untrammelled to any conclusion to which, in his judgment, truth conducts him, or to stop short of any conclusion which he does not see reason to reach, the advocates of a 'broad' fellowship say, How can you require any good man to believe as you do, as a condition to your fellowship, without overlooking the greater for the less, or without infringing upon his liberty as a thinker? If a man's life is right, and he wishes to work with you, you must admit him to your fellowship, whatever his opinions. The number of such extremists among *us* has not been large. The atmosphere of our Church has never proved inviting or healthy for them. But we have had them, nevertheless, some of them desiring to sweep away our 'Confession' altogether, and all of them

agreeing that it is gross intolerance, a despicable copying of 'orthodox' narrowness and bigotry, to insist on any difference between faith and unbelief as a ground of fellowship, if one but calls himself a Christian, and desires admission to our ministry. Away with 'heresy-hunting'! has been their cry. Let us be 'broad'! Let us be 'liberal'! What if a man does not fully accept our standards? Let him be true to himself. His advanced thought is doubtless so much fresh gold, dug from the mines of truth without regard to authority or prescription. Better for us, perhaps, if we were a Church without any doors; but since we have them, let us throw them open wide enough to admit every earnest soul, and all who can be induced to join us, without inquiring too minutely as to their faith, or whether they accept the 'Confession' just as it was meant to be accepted or not.

This kind of talk has enough of the sound of large and generous thinking to deceive not a few who would at once repudiate it, were it not for this superficial seeming of tolerance and magnanimity. But it only needs to be emptied of its pretty words, and to be regarded with reference to its substance, to be seen to have but one meaning, and to tend to but one result. As the statement of a general principle, it would make any special co-operation on the basis of common convictions or sympathies impossible; and as a programme of action by our Church, or any church, it means inevitable disintegration — the loss of Christian distinctness, and the consequent loss of Christian power. Fellowship of any sort necessarily implies some ground of special sympathy on which those in fellowship stand together; and if it is no infringement of the liberty of personal thinking for those associated in scientific pursuits to require scientific tastes and sympathies as a ground of their scientific fellowship, or for those banded for some philanthropic purpose to exclude from their membership those indifferent or opposed to the objects they are associated to serve, how or why can it be a violation of any law of courtesy, or of anybody's rights as a thinker, to insist that no man shall be fellowshipped as a minister of Christ unless he has faith in Christ as the special messenger of God, and sympathy with the ends which, in God's behalf, he is seeking to accomplish?

An association, by whatever name called, would be but a promiscuous herd of people destitute of any common thought or aim, if, without regard to its purpose, everybody so disposed, on the ground that he is a decent man, could demand admission into it; and the same principle applied to a church would make it a mockery of anything like the true church-idea, robbing Christian fellowship of all distinctive meaning, and the ministry of everything peculiar to it as the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Only he, clearly, who, whatever he may be ready to say, sincerely accepts the Bible as the authoritative record of God's Word, and believes in Christ as Lord and Redeemer, can fitly be sent out to preach truth and duty on the authority of the Bible, and to summon souls to that faith in Christ which can alone quicken and sanctify them unto salvation. As well might one be graduated to teach mathematics who denies the multiplication table, or to practise medicine, believing it his business to poison instead of to cure.

Equally by our principles and our traditions, we are irrevocably committed to liberty of opinion and the largest right of free inquiry. No people are more thoroughly pervaded with the instinct of rebellion against all that would deny, or limit, or in the slightest degree trench upon this liberty; nor, under any circumstances, can we be otherwise than tolerant and catholic without being false to every suggestion and requirement of the Gospel as we receive it. But we stand also — we always have stood — for the Bible, for Christ and the Divine Authority of his religion. As a branch of the Church of Christ, we exist solely to convert men to faith in him, and to persuade them to accept and follow him as Lord. So existing, we should become a lie the moment we should lose sight of this purpose, and admit to our fellowship, no matter on what pretext, men without faith in the Bible, or in Christ as the Sent of God; for how could such men convert their hearers to faith in Christ, or plead with them to give themselves to him? Perceiving this, we have always discriminated between liberty and license — between the right of free inquiry and the right to hold infidel opinions under a garb of Christian pretence. It is to be hoped that we always shall make this distinction.

Doing so, while we shall maintain the right of unlimited freedom of interpretation in our Church on the basis of the Bible, and the equal right of all Christians to understand the Bible for themselves, we shall no less rigorously maintain that any who cannot, without reserve, build on this Christian basis, must exercise their freedom of thought and rights of conscience outside our Christian recognition. Unbelief, infidelity *is* infidelity, gloss or sugar-coat it as we may. Our duty is to treat it as such, in whomsoever it may come knocking at our doors; and if it be charged that this is illiberality, the sufficient reply is, in the words of the wise and catholic Dr. Ballou, that the harm is "not in calling things by their right names, but in a wrong spirit towards the things themselves. We may be very illiberal in our treatment of one whom we acknowledge to be a Christian; we may be perfectly liberal in our relations with those whom we do not regard as Christians. If an otherwise good man is, in point of fact, not a believer, in the New Testament sense of the term, we ought to say so frankly; and then, if he suffers unjustly on *that* account, it is of course because there is an unjust odium against the name that properly belongs to him, and our duty is to remove that undue prejudice, — not to violate truth by striving to shelter him under a false appellation."*

This is the position of a practical common sense. Occupying it, we limit nobody. We hinder nobody. We deny nobody's rights. We withhold our hand from no worthy man, who, *as a worthy man*, asks our recognition. We simply deal with things as they are, saying, Our *Christian* fellowship has a distinctive *Christian* meaning, and can be given only to those who stand by faith on the Christian foundation. Any other position can be occupied by us only at our peril. We gain nothing when we admit any man to our ministry who does not put himself squarely and honestly on our Christian platform. Those who would admit such tell us, sometimes, of the acquisitions we should receive, had we 'more liberal' terms of fellowship, and admonish us to think how much we are losing by shutting

* Universalist Quarterly, Vol. iii. p. 387.

them out. But *such* losses are always gains, as *such* additions are weakness instead of strength. We trifle with momentous interests, and place much at hazard, every time we experiment with such a man; and though I have known rare instances in which young men of immature and unsettled opinions, with decided doubts and uncertainties instead of faith, have ripened into ministers of clear thought, devoted and useful, the risk of putting such men into the pulpit is too great, the proprieties sacrificed too serious, and the answer to every application of this sort should be, Settle your own faith first, before asking to be sent out as a teacher of faith to others. *No* man, indeed, it should be held, is in a condition even to think towards our ministry, until, as Christ asks the olden question, "Whom say ye that I am?" he is able, in full assurance, to say with Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God;"—"thou hast the words of eternal life." As a matter of conviction, only such a man is qualified to preach Christ for the establishment and edification of others; and, almost as important in another sense, as a matter of moral preparedness, only such a man has the faith which can remove mountains, and so give the vigor and earnestness, the courage and persistence, by which only are ministerial success and victory won.

II. Another requisite to entrance into our ministry is *a personal religious experience.* Ordinarily, one's religion is not a thing for him to talk about, and one's religious experience, if he has had any, is something too sacred, as between his soul and God, for any one else to pry into. But, as when one desires to assume the vows of church membership, so when the question is, Shall this man be a minister of Christ, for the salvation of souls? all such reserve should cease. A personal, spiritual awakening, a profound and mastering religious experience is, next to faith, the primary condition of ministerial usefulness, without which there can be no such feeling, thinking, preaching, aim, or work of any sort, as the office demands. Were the minister's business simply to instruct, the case would be different. But his grand purpose is, not to instruct, or intellectually to convince. He deals with themes concerning which most of

those to whom he speaks are already, theoretically, in substantial agreement with him. Using these — for the most part — conceded truths, his business is to arouse, to convert, to stimulate, to bend obstinate knees in contrition before the cross, and so to lead souls to Christ, consecrated to God in the Christian life. Everything else is subordinate to this. Christ is Teacher; but he is something more: is Teacher only that he may be Quickener and Inspirer. So every minister, pleading with souls in his name, should seek to be. But how can he impart what he does not possess? How quicken others if he has never himself been quickened? How prostrate other knees before the cross if his own have not first knelt there? How help his hearers into the religious life if he is not himself religious, and his own soul has never thrilled with the fervors and the indwelling power which he is the medium to communicate?

I judge no man; but I confess that it strikes me as quite out of the line of all natural sequence and probability to look for permanent religious fruit from one with whom talk about religion is simply perfunctory and professional, — never spontaneous. Nor does it seem to me reasonable that any church is likely to be much profited by ministers who are personally never *en rapport* with the deepest and most vital themes of the pulpit; who care only to deny or to argue, or who would rather be in a theatre than in a conference meeting, or whose tastes run to stale jokes and low and lewd stories rather than to the 'communion of saints,' or to converse on Gospel themes; who impress nobody as religious men, and who fail to diffuse any odor of seriousness or consecration, however in talking they may simulate what they do not feel, and in some instances even appear to be the means of producing results in others which have never been produced in themselves. The law of influence is subtile, but absolute. According to what we *are*, magnetic currents flow from us; and in the long run, such men, however eloquent or seemingly in earnest, seldom give out anything for the spiritual help of anybody; are found, on the contrary, usually, to lower the tone of taste and character, religiously, of all with whom they are brought into closest association. If one is to communicate, he must have.

"He is a well-meaning brother, of good ability," I remember to have once heard one of our ministers say of another, "*but he has never experienced religion.*" Will any one say that this was 'the right man in the right place'? The remark was made many years ago; but the description, unfortunately, is precisely that which, speaking truthfully, would have to be given of many a minister whom I have since known — of not a few in our pulpits as of some in others; men not bad in any sense — most of them meaning well, but lacking any positive affinity with religion, and having no more consciousness of what it is as an experience, or as a pervading, in-working power, than the heart of an iceberg has of warmth, or than the calculating brain of a mathematician has of the kindling of a poet's soul. And a human being more utterly out of place than such a minister, who can find? Put a man, who has never seen the sea, on board a ship, to navigate it across the ocean, — put a plough-boy, who knows nothing of steam, or valves, in charge of an engine, or a locomotive, — set one up in business, who is ignorant of accounts and has no idea of bargains, and you do what is no more unreasonable, or preposterous, than when a man is put into the pulpit, who, even though his perceptions, theoretically, may be clear, and his convictions intelligent and firm, knows nothing experimentally of the religion which he is to represent, or of its quickening and saving work.

Only a little while ago, I heard of a minister who — I use the precise words reported to me from his lips — gave this account of his entrance into the ministry, — it is no concern here to say into *what* ministry: "I found that I had the gift of gab, and an opportunity to go to a theological school being offered me, I determined to make my gift available in that direction." "But had you no religious experience, no impulse to prayer, no spirit of devotion?" asked the friend to whom the statement was made. "None, whatever," was the frank reply. "At least, you had some positive faith, — a clear assurance of the truth of Christianity, and a firm persuasion as to the soundness of what you were to preach?" "Nothing of the kind," was the rejoinder. "I simply knew that I could talk, and seeing in

the ministry my best field for talk, and in the particular denomination with which I identified myself as good an opening as anywhere, I went in. That's the whole of it." What shall we say of a man who could so mock all the sacred themes with which he was to deal as to go into the ministry in the state of mind, and from the motives, thus confessed? Or, what spiritual future can there be for any church the doors of whose ministry are so carelessly kept as to render it possible for *such* men to be among its ministers? And yet, we have had such ministers as well as other churches; and those of us most familiar with the facts would be able, if required, to put our fingers upon the names of some such occupying our pulpits this very day.

It is time that the entrance of any more such — at least into our ministry, should cease. If it is needful that a candidate be examined in opinion, or in literary and theological acquirements, why not as to spiritual condition and religious preparedness? Hitherto, for reasons sufficiently set forth in the chapter on Experimental Religion and pages preceding, far less attention has been given among us to this experimental element of Christian power, alike in the pulpit and in the pews, than was for our good. It must not be so in the time to come. If we are to be a living Christian people, doing positive Christian work, a New Departure in this respect, as I trust has hereinbefore been made apparent, is indispensable. And if there is to be such a New Departure among the people, it must begin among the ministers. As said in opening, they are the leaders. If there are to be torches carried, their hands are to carry them. If there are coals from off God's altar with which we are to be set aflame, their hearts are the censers in which they are first to burn. We cannot be a Church pervaded with religious life except as our ministers foster and impart it. Thank God for all that is telling of an increased spiritual vitality among us — the result mainly, under God, of what spiritually-awakened and religious ministers have been trying to do. But there is yet great opportunity for improvement; and if this improvement is to be made, our ministers must be the chief instruments for promoting it.

I have tried to show that, if we are to be the Church we should aim to be, we must be a more devout, Bible-reading, praying, consecrated people; but, while fully recognizing all that individual believers, through the help of the Bible and the quickenings and nutriment of the Holy Spirit, have been and may be independent of ministerial influence, making their own way upward in the religious life, it is not too much to say, speaking of ourselves collectively, that we cannot be such a people except as we have devout, Bible-reading, praying, consecrated ministers: ministers glowing with religious fervor; ministers instinct with spiritual life; ministers knowing within themselves what it is to be baptized through and through with the baptism from on high, and, like Stephen and Barnabas, 'good men, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith,' giving themselves 'continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word;' ministers who live with their hearts close to Christ's, in the atmosphere of an habitual consciousness of God and in sweet and holy nearness to him, and who thus become channels through which the life of God may flow into the lives of those for whom they labor.

Let me not be suspected of urging that ministers should be other than fresh, natural, genial men. Whatever those not such men may do elsewhere, only those who are such can be of service to us. We have no room for ministers who think it necessary in any way to sink the man, or whose whole stock in trade is the cut of their coats, or a sanctimoniousness of countenance. We want no cant; no pretence; no sacerdotal formalism; no priestly airs, or austere affectations; no assumptions of a mystical functionaryism, as if a minister plus his office weighs a single iota more than he weighs by virtue of what he is as a man. We want no whining; no stiff, strait-laced, long-faced pietism; no fossilized acidity that reckons it the chief end of religion to suppress every mirthful emotion, calling the world meanwhile to take note how devout it is, or tragically clasping its hands and turning up its eyes, and groaning O! at the folly or the wickedness it is compelled to witness. Thoughtful people sickened of this long ago; and of all Christians, we, with our humane, sensible, cheerful faith, should revolt

from it with the most utter disgust. Religion is genuine manliness, — a real, hearty, healthy spiritual life ; and what we want in our ministry, first of all, is men — full-blooded, wholesome, hearty, sympathetic men, alive in every human fibre and faculty, willing to pass for just what they are worth, neither pedants nor pharisees, and able to see and enjoy all there is in life, in a large, free, wise understanding of what God intended our human life to be. But no matter how wholesome, hearty, or sympathetic a man may be in other respects, he has no fitness for the ministry, and can be in no proper sense useful in it, except as his 'life is hid with Christ in God.' The more of a man he is, and the fuller he is of all human juices, the better ; but he must be sanctified to the core. Every beat of his heart should be a thought of God and a prayer. Conscious of the Unseen and the Imperishable, his whole being should be flooded from above ; and centred on God, having his 'conversation in heaven,' his character should be saturated with religious sensibility and purpose, and every wish and thought should be keyed to the Divine. Only such a man is really in sympathy with the minister's work, or is likely to be of service in the minister's office.

Has not the time fully come for us to commit ourselves to this position, and to show, by what we exact for entrance into our ministry, that we intend to maintain it? No matter how brilliant, well-informed, or apparently promising in other respects, no man should henceforth find the door into our ministry open to him, under any circumstances, or through any influence, except as it is made satisfactorily to appear that he is, experimentally and thoroughly, a religious man. Talent, eloquence, learning, readiness of utterance, all these are desirable, and, when consecrated, are means of power. But personal religion alone infuses into them the element by which they can be made effective for the spiritual quickening and salvation of souls ; and what use, finally, have we, or has any church, for ministers except for these ends?

III. Still another requisite for entrance into our ministry should be *a hearty confession of obligation to co-operate in our Church-work.* The Report of the Board of Trustees of our

General Convention for 1872 contained a statement of painful significance. Speaking of various causes accounting for our failure to realize the sum voted by the Convention during the year, the Trustees say, "But after due allowance has been made for extraordinary events unfavorable to our work, the fact remains that, with some honorable exceptions, we have lacked the hearty co-operation of our clergy — a co-operation without which no church-enterprise can succeed, and with which, freely given at the beginning of the year, the Special Fund could have been easily raised." The painful significance of this statement is in the fact that it discloses a chronic lack among us, from which we are widely and very seriously suffering. More than on any other single account, our denominational work fails to be done as we have the abundant resources to do it, solely because so many of our ministers refuse or neglect to put themselves into sympathetic accord with our plans and efforts, as alike their Christian vows and their denominational obligations require. This may seem a sweeping assertion. I mean it to be so. It is time that the truth on this point should be fully told, to arrest the attention and stir to the action it calls for; and I desire to emphasize the statement just made, as one intended to affirm all that the language seems to convey. It has fallen to my lot to have peculiar occasion to know whereof I affirm touching this subject. During the past thirty years, I have been intimately associated with our Church activities in four different States, and I have also held similar relations to our general work from the hour it was begun. And from first to last, wherever I have been, whatever the effort in hand, the one thing most in our way, the one incubus which it has been found most impossible to lift, or remove, has been the indifference, the inertia, the irresponsiveness of our ministers. Noble exceptions there have been, as the Board of Trustees testified of the year of which they spoke — in the aggregate, many of them. But the rule has been, on one plea or another, inertia, unconcern, inaction, thwarting, hindering, enfeebling what has been undertaken, — in not a few instances, causing what might have been a gratifying success to end in mortifying failure. And the testimony I am thus compelled

to give in respect to the fields and efforts with which I have been familiar, is, I am confident, in substance, precisely that which will be given by those in like relations elsewhere.

Various explanations of this state of things suggest themselves — explanations which enable us to see how men may be thus at fault, and yet be in the main good men, as the most of our ministers have been and are; but explanations, or no explanations, what has thus wrought so much to our injury, and what is still so weakening and hindering us, must henceforward cease, or our fate is sealed. Sad and instructive demonstration was more than once furnished by the Army of the Potomac of what an army, however excellent or otherwise well-appointed, is likely to accomplish if officered by men without loyalty to those in command, and therefore indisposed to enter heartily into their plans. And what is true in this regard of an army thus officered, is equally true of a church whose ministers have no sympathy with the work it proposes. The chief explanation of the vigor and growth of the Methodist Church is in the fact that it is organized on the principle that every minister in its connection not only owes it allegiance, but is formally and sacredly pledged to loyalty and co-operation in its service, rendering himself liable to discipline and suspension if he fails to keep this pledge. The same thing, after some form, is true of every church that has ever made itself a religious power. Is it to be supposed that there is success for us on any other terms? Its ministers are the propelling, executive forces of every church; and it is the testimony alike of all observation and of all experience that as are the ministers so is the church. In respect to the highest religious pleadings and appeals, it must be confessed, the most earnest ministers not unfrequently find many of their people much too impervious and irresponsive. But in all matters of denominational interest and church-work, the temper of the minister usually determines that of the people; and if, feeling right and working faithfully, ministers will wisely lead, the people will follow. There are occasional exceptions; but the rule is that a live minister makes a live people, and that a dead or indifferent minister makes a people like him-

self. Under God, therefore, it rests with our ministers to determine whether we are to be a live, enterprising, growing Church, or the contrary; and if our work lags, or fails, — if our appointed collections are neglected, or, if taken, are small and unappreciative, compared with what they should be, — if our statistical reports are neglected, — if our Convention and its plans get no thought or sympathy, and the Church is the object of no loving loyalty, or generous consideration, the fault will, mainly, be theirs.

One thing is certain: If as a Church we have any right to be, there is something for us to do, — a constantly enlarging work of teaching, building, and church extension to which, according to our growth and the increase of our resources, we are summoned of God to address ourselves. We claim to have God's truth. If we have, no words can exaggerate the greatness of the trust, or the seriousness of our responsibilities. We have it for no mere purpose of theory or sentiment. Christ did not come that he might give men something to believe or argue about. We have it as the stewards of God, that 'in Christ's stead,' we may proclaim it, and help on the triumphs of God's kingdom and the redemption of our race. We are no Church of Christ if the consciousness of such a work does not possess us. And if we have such a work, how is it to be done? — how, except as every one bearing our name catches something of the impulse to help it on? — how, especially, except as every minister who seeks our fellowship counts it his duty to enlist in it, and, to the extent of his ability, to push it forward? I may have extreme, and therefore unsound, views; but on any theory of morals, or of the fitness of things, which I find it possible to hold, it seems to me the most unpardonable trifling for any man to ask our fellowship as a minister, and then coolly to assume that he owes our Church no loyalty or service, and that he has the right to treat with utter indifference all the denominational enterprises that are soliciting his furtherance and co-operation. For what end do denominations, with their fellowship, exist except that they may undertake and the better accomplish such enterprises? And why should any one seek identification with us in form, unless he is ready heartily to identify himself

with us in spirit, and in all that, in Christ's name, we are trying to do?

The question of sects or churches is simply a question of instruments. No wise man loves any organization, be it a sect, a church, or whatever else, for itself — only for what it represents, and for its uses. The obligation to labor for the truth being conceded, the obligation to employ the best means for its service follows of course; and on the same principle upon which associated action in every other department of life is found to be most effective, a sect, or church, is proved to be not only a moral necessity if men have any positiveness of conviction and purpose, but the best means for religious work. As such a means, it has imperative claims, by so much as the truth itself has any claims, on every one in sympathy with the ideas it represents; and whoever, so sympathizing with it, fails to unite with and support it, — above all, whoever connects himself with it and then declines or neglects to do what he can to make it a power, fails to be either consistent or faithful, and incurs guilt accordingly.

The world is wide, and no man is compelled to ask our fellowship. But choosing to ask it, it can be honestly, or honorably, accepted only as, in good faith, all the responsibilities and obligations which it implies are accepted with it — alike those specially denominational as well as those in a more general sense called Christian. In such a case, denominational duties become Christian duties. Nor, though there are very good men who do it, can I conceive of conduct more flagrantly violating every principle of manly dealing than that of which those are guilty, who seek and take our fellowship only to be oblivious to every such duty. There are two classes who do this: — on the one hand, those who seem to think that they confer a favor upon us by patronizing us with their presence and consenting to occupy our pulpits, and that, doing so much, they are at liberty to hold themselves haughtily or contemptuously aloof from all our plans, as if such things could be no concern of theirs; — on the other hand, those who lazily count it enough not to render themselves liable to discipline for what is called immoral conduct, and who thereupon pocket

the money for preaching in positions to which our fellowship has introduced them, apparently with not the most distant thought that they owe it to themselves, or to us, to speak a word, or lift a finger, in behalf of anything we are doing. Ready, and usually eager, to avail themselves of all the advantages of denominational association, both these classes are alike dead to all sense of denominational obligation, and act as if churches existed merely to serve their personal convenience.

Have we not suffered, are we not suffering enough on account of such ministers? Do we desire any more such? Are we willing that any more shall find their way among us, to hinder, weaken and discourage us? If not, should we not say so, and take measures to insure that only those of a different spirit and purpose shall henceforth receive our fellowship? It is one of the fundamental statutes of our Convention that "every clergyman applying for fellowship shall be understood as thereby pledging a due observance of all the laws of the Convention." Here is the provision sufficient, if duly enforced, for all that is demanded. Shall it be so enforced? What but comparative feebleness and failure is before us if it is not? Is it wisdom for us to neglect alike the lessons of our own experience, and the suggestions that come to us from the growth and prosperity of others? Why should we not for the upbuilding and extension of the kingdom of truth, avail ourselves of laws and principles which have been found so effective for the furtherance of error? It is often said, when the lessons from other churches in this particular are referred to, that the genius of our Church is unlike that of those representing a severer theology, and that we are not to be brought to the acceptance of such principles of responsibility as they adopt. Is it so? Certainly, the genius of our Church, theologically, is different from that of these other churches; but is it therefore different in respect to the wisest and most practical ways of compassing essential church-ends? If it is, and we really cannot be brought to accept the principles and to comply with the conditions upon which, in the nature of things, success depends, then there is no future for us as a Church, and our errand is fulfilled. But this, I trust,

none of us believe. It used to be said that we never could be organized in any compact and positive form. We have disproved that. We shall, I hope, equally disprove the assumption that the genius of our Church is so loose and lawless that we cannot be induced to adopt the principle that there is such an obligation as denominational fealty, and that ministers who have sought our fellowship are bound to enlist in our Church-work, and must be duly dealt with as unfaithful if they do not. At all events, it is only as we proceed upon this principle that the UNIVERSALIST CHURCH can fulfil the destiny to which it is invited. It is for us to say whether we will perceive the necessity thus laid upon us, and shape our requirements accordingly; nor can I fail to add that our theological schools will not, in my judgment, do their whole duty in the way of Ministerial Education, and send forth ministers prepared for the best service, until they shall have Chairs specially charged to train young men to a proper estimate of obligation, and to a familiarity with the best methods, in this regard.

IV. The final requisite to be now mentioned for entrance hereafter into our ministry is *a chivalrous sinking of self in consecration to Christ and the Church.* A sorrowful illustration was given me, a year or two since, of the spirit in which some young men are entering the ministry. Talking with a theological student, I inquired about his classmates and others, and received this reply: "There isn't a man in the class who isn't good for two thousand dollars when he gets through!" I inwardly exclaimed, God help the church of which they are to be ministers, if this is what all the class are thinking of, and did not continue the conversation. Does it need to be said that any such mercenariness of motive totally unfits one for the ministry? In its very nature, the ministry is necessarily, in some sort, a renunciation of self, and all mere self-seeking. Ordinarily, indeed, the rule is, as Paul well states it, "that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel;" and, except under peculiar circumstances, no man is justified in continuing in the ministry unless he can realize enough from his labors to keep himself and his family above want: for "if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his

own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." But, while one is warranted in duly keeping this obligation in mind, and cannot ordinarily be warranted in failing so to keep it in mind, the true minister, as he contemplates his work, never stops to consider how much he is to get for it. Impressed with the supreme importance of spiritual things, and filled with a desire to devote his life to them, he finds himself, by an irresistible impulse, precipitated into the ministry. No thought of place or pay occupies him. His thought is only of God and Christ and souls. A sense alike of duty and of privilege possesses and propels him. Paul admirably tells the story: "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel." This is the real call to the ministry; and without this call, it is sacrilege for any man even to look towards the office — as if it were a mere profession or trade, to be chosen, as other pursuits may be, with reference to the position or 'salary' it will give. Only as one forgets every worldly advantage, in a willingness to relinquish all for Christ's sake and the Gospel's, is he in a condition to debate whether he will be a minister of the cross.

And this surrender of every worldly and secular ambition, in a relinquishment of all thought of wealth and place and the right to pursue them, does but indicate what is involved in the nature of the ministry as a renunciation of every element of a mere self-assertion. Self, as a ruling force, has no rightful place in the minister's life. To *minister* means to *serve;* and in the very act of becoming a minister, one at all conscious of what he is doing consecrates himself to *service,* abdicating all right to consider himself, or his own ease, or his own will, and pledging that he will think only, or most, of God and Christ and those interests whose servant henceforth he is. Whoever becomes a soldier merges his whole selfhood into his duty as a soldier — to go where, to do what, to die when, the word of legitimate command may direct or require. In like manner, every minister, so far as he is a true minister, merges himself in Christ and the Church, and the service to which he is pledged — as of old every knight lost his own will in that of the lady whose plume he bore. *I am nothing, — Christ and his cause are*

everything, is the feeling that becomes uppermost in every heart that has, with any earnestness or sincerity, dedicated itself to the minister's work. It is the heroic spirit that is demanded; and, on this account, every man fitted to be a minister is to this extent a hero.

This heroism, this utter abnegation of self, is the one lesson of Christ's life and cross, as it is of the life of every Apostle. Our Lord's thought never was of himself, or of his personal preferences or ends, but always of the Gospel and of human help and salvation; and Paul's chivalrous utterance — in which spoke the spirit of all the Apostles — was, "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." They all lost themselves in their work. Why should not we lose ourselves as entirely in the same work? If we have the same Gospel, can it demand less of us than it did of them? Are not the same interests concerned? Do not the same motives appeal to us? Have we not the same ends to further? And if they only did their duty in all their earnestness, their self-renunciation, their willingness to sacrifice, and their entire identification of themselves with whatever could save souls and advance their cause, how can we do ours except as we emulate their example in a forgetfulness of self and of all self-aims and theories, in a consecration to our work, in an enthusiasm for our Church, and in an *esprit de corps* for our appointed plans and methods, that shall knit all our hearts into one, make everything else except our love and reverence for God secondary, and commit us, soul and body, in solid phalanx, to whatever may be needful to give strength, unity and power to our Church, and thus to make it most effective as a Christian instrumentality in the world?

No man should sacrifice his manhood, or renounce his self-respect, or sink himself into an echo or a tool, for anybody, or any cause. With *such* sacrifices God is not well pleased; and, if they are ever asked of us, we may be sure that whoever or whatever requires them is not of Him. Nor are such sacrifices needful for the church enthusiasm, or the denominational *esprit de corps*, here insisted upon. All that

is enjoined is a becoming subordination of self in allegiance to what is grander and more important, and simple earnestness and loyalty in honest and manly devotion to the cause which we profess to believe is the cause of truth and God. Is this too much to ask of any man?

Does some one say, I want to be large-minded and free, and such a devotion to any particular church narrows our sympathies, and renders a broad, free, catholic spirit impossible? The most obvious reply, were we compelled to concede the narrowing thus affirmed, would be, Why, then, seek to connect yourself with any particular church? But the better reply is, a denial of the affirmation. For how or why does a love for the church that best embodies his convictions hinder a man from being, in freedom or largeness of sympathy, all that any earnest and honest man need to desire? May not one love his country, and yet have room in his heart for a comprehensive sympathy with all mankind? May he not be a member of a family, faithful to every family duty, and yet be true to every broader relation? Why, then, may he not be consecrated to his church, ardently seeking its extension and welfare, and at the same time be no whit less in breadth and catholicity as a large-hearted, independent, Christian man? The verdict of experience is that he can be. Altogether too much sectarian exclusiveness and bigotry, we have to confess, there has been, dishonoring the Gospel, and fractionalizing and weakening the Church. But among the finest things in history — not second to any valor or sacrifice of heroes and patriots in the struggles of civil strife — are the records of those, of all names and forms of faith, who, while cultivating the kindly spirit of the Master, and according generous regard and recognition to all, have nevertheless, for the love of Christ and in the service of their own dear church, counted all precious things worthless, giving up home and friends, welcoming danger, enduring persecution, and facing death itself, that they might convert souls, and extend what they have believed to be the truth.

The *esprit de corps* and enthusiasm for our Church which I plead may henceforth be made indispensable for entrance into our ministry only require that we shall, in our turn,

illustrate what all such, in their place, have shown to be possible. In no way narrowed, duly respecting ourselves, and with hearts full of a generous sympathy with every earnest effort to serve God and do good to man, we are to catch the baptism of their spirit — the spirit of Christ and of all the saints and martyrs who have lived and died for his sake, in a determined and self-forgetful zeal for our Church, which will render us willing to go anywhere, which will count no labor too exhausting and no sacrifice too great, if we can thus increase its vitality, widen its field of influence and augment its power. See what this zeal for Christ and this devotion to their Church are doing for others! — for the Romanists, for the Methodists, for every church thus served, as men of ability and culture and delicately reared women, no less than men of coarser grain and lower attainments, sever every domestic tie and turn their backs on all the attractions of cultivated society and desirable position and pleasant surroundings — often taking their lives in their hands, to go forth among the rude, the poor, the degraded, the heathen, that they may plant the banner of their church in new fields, enlighten the ignorant, rescue the perishing, and advance the line of Christian light in its conquests over error and sin. Is there any reason why they should feel more, or do more, than we? We are accustomed to claim that the Gospel, as we hold it, makes Christ more precious to us than he can be to those of a narrower faith: why should we not practically show that we love him at least as much as these, by a zeal as fervid, by a concern for souls as intense, by a missionary impulse as enterprising and heroic, by a readiness to labor and to sacrifice as great? We should; and no man is prepared to take up our work and to be a minister of our truth in the new and more spiritual Departure before us, as this truth suggests and demands, except as he is prepared thus to sink self and to prove his love for Christ, and his marriage, soul and body, to our Church, at any cost.

The Universalist Church is nothing on its own account; but as the organization of the world's grandest truth, and as a means of influence for the enlightenment and redemption of men, it is of inexpressible worth. For this reason,

next to God and Christ, and in their behalf, it deserves our supreme thought, and therefore the undivided loyalty of our hearts, and the service of all we have and are. All that we can give it is, at most, but a trivial offering, compared with what this Church includes and represents. A reasonable individualism we are always to maintain; but what are we personally — our idiosyncrasies, our preferences, our independence, compared with the Gospel of Christ, and its claims on our wise, united, earnest labor? Put the best man of us all into one scale, rating him at his highest importance, and this Church of ours, with its treasures of truth and splendid possibility, into the other, and which will kick the beam? The Protestant principles of the right of private judgment, and of the final accountability of each soul to God, are great principles, never to be forgotten or disregarded; but, like all great principles, they may be carried to extremes, and are subject to the limitations of reason, and social necessity and obligation. These limitations have heretofore been widely overlooked among us. We must see that they are not overlooked hereafter. Our business as Universalists is not simply to sow seeds, but to cultivate harvests; not simply to see that ideas are diffused, but to organize them, that they may be consciously held and efficiently served: and how, as ministers, can we do this, unless we each waive something of our sharp individualism, that we may be merged — not into each other, but into our work, and, in the completeness of our consecration, and the contagion of our enthusiasm, and a forgetfulness of ourselves, flow together, to labor in a spirit of mutual accountability and service, for one common end? Give us 'ministers of the right stamp' in this particular — earnest, chivalric, full of love for Christ and the truth, and all else will come right; but without such ministers, whatever else may be in our favor, everything will go wrong. As, then, we love our Church, and desire its extension and perpetuity, so far as by wise provisions, wisely enforced, it is in our power to select and exclude, only such ministers should from this time forward be permitted entrance among us.

With these words, I leave the subject. It has grown upon me beyond my expectations. But it is vital to our future; and no question of weightier moment presses upon us, than that which asks, Shall we have the New Departure to which we are summoned in this respect? It is a great thing to be a Universalist minister, thoroughly furnished — morally, intellectually, spiritually, for the work which our Church needs and the time demands. No higher office can be aspired to; no graver responsibilities can be assumed. Shall we who now fill the office becomingly feel this fact, and aim to be worthy of the place? Shall due care be taken that those who hereafter ask our fellowship are the kind of men the office has a right to expect and require? Better no ministers than ministers unsuited to the demand. Men — good men, of warm hearts, of large, well-trained minds, of souls awakened and consecrate, — chivalric, religious, unselfish, these are what we should henceforth insist on, or keep our doors closed. And such men, filled with the Master's spirit, and bound together in a common enthusiasm for our Church, what may they not do? What might we not look for as the result of their united labors?

— As I ask these questions, there comes before me a scene which I try to think of as prophetic. It was in the church at Springfield, Mass., at the close of the Conference called to consider our condition and wants, and what should be done to make us, more perfectly, spiritually active and effective. Only ministers were present. The holy hush of the night was about us. The profound impression of the season we had spent together in counsel and in prayer was upon us. It was an hour of communion, of confession, of exhortation, of reflection and high resolve — the like of which none of us had ever known before, and such as few of us will ever see again. Old, middle-aged, and young, our hearts were all attuned to the same key; and while each was thinking his own thoughts and living his own life, true to his individual being, one spirit was in all our hearts, and we were melted into one brotherhood of mutual love and labor, with one aim, one desire, one consecrating purpose. It was unity complete; and as, with hands clasped, we knelt in a circle that stretched around the entire edifice,

and the voice of supplication went up, asking God's benediction of grace and strength, there was not one of us, I am sure, who did not feel, as he had seldom felt before, the special presence of God and the Saviour, and devoutly ask their help to live and labor ever after in the frame of soul which then possessed us. That kneeling, praying, united, thoroughly attuned company of brethren is evermore the symbol in my thought of what our ministry should be. God help us, that we may each do our part to fulfil it as a prophecy of what our ministry is.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CHURCH.

THEORETICALLY, Universalists, with rare exceptions, have always believed in THE CHURCH — that is, they have assented to it, have made no opposition against it; — *practically*, they have quite generally neglected, or altogether ignored it. From the very first, indeed, there have been those, both in our pulpits and in our pews, who have strenuously urged its claims, our need of it, and our obligations with respect to it. But the most of our ministers, occupied in other directions, have had no enthusiasm in pressing its importance; and the great mass of those constituting our congregations, while saying in effect, If there are those who wish to have a Church, let them by all means be gratified, have regarded the whole subject with indifference, apparently inaccessible to any appeal concerning it. As the consequence, our parishes, or 'societies,' have usually been organized with little or no thought of a Church, and, once so organized, have been content to go on, year after year, without one; and when churches have been gathered, as was substantially remarked in our Survey of the Field, the membership, as the rule, has been altogether disproportionate to the congregation, with a lamentable absence of men even from this meagre number. It is easy to explain all this; and the review of our history, in some of the preceding chapters, sufficiently suggests the explanation. Just here, however, we are more concerned with the fact than with the explanation. A great improvement has of late years been in progress; but even now, while our last returns give us *nine hundred and sixty-nine* parishes, they give us but *five hundred and sixty-five* churches; and with *forty-three thousand seven hundred and seventy-one* families reported — an aggregate in round numbers, reckoning *five* persons to a family, of *two hundred nineteen thousand* — we have reported

a church-membership only of *twenty-seven thousand three hundred and seventy-nine,* — about one eighth. These figures, probably, do not fully represent either our aggregate numbers, or our actual church-membership; but they furnish tolerable data on which to estimate the ratio of the latter as compared with the former. This ratio, it is true, might be smaller; but is it at all what is demanded by the highest welfare of the interests we have in charge, and does it not reveal a failure on the part of a large portion of our people to appreciate the real nature of our work as a Christian denomination, and the kind of means by which alone it is to be done?

It is unnecessary to repeat what, in so many forms, has been set forth in the pages foregoing. But we cannot be too constantly reminded that spiritual life is the one final condition of religious power; and, unless all that has hereinbefore been said is unfounded, incalculable detriment has come to our cause from the state of thought and feeling among us which this wide-spread neglect of the Church evinces, — has come to us, *first,* because we have so lacked the religious life and purpose which the Church expresses; and, *second,* because we have so failed to make use of the Church as one of the appointed means of religious influence. Is not this a sufficient warning as to our need of a New Departure in this regard, and a corresponding call that we earnestly give ourselves to the effort to promote and deepen the tendency towards a better state of things? To organize churches, or to swell by any means the number of those formally connected with them, is not, let it be confessed, the highest duty of a Christian people. Church-membership, unfortunately, is not always a sign of elevated character, or of a consecrated life; nor has any Church, probably, ever yet gathered into itself all the truly Christian souls of the congregation with which it has been connected. There are as good people outside formal Church associations as there are inside; and there are not a few who talk much about Religion and the Church and the Lord's Supper, who would honor Christ and the Christian cause far more, though they never joined a Church, if they talked less of these things, and lived nearer to the Saviour, more loyal to his cause.

But, notwithstanding these things, the fact none the less remains, that the Church is the appointed method for the organization of Christian faith and purpose, and an important aid in Christian culture; and those who believe in Christ, loving and meaning to serve him, are in their true relations to God or to him, to the conditions of their own best life, or to the world, only as they are in sacred covenant with God in church-membership.

There are three senses in which the word CHURCH seems to be used in the New Testament: — 1. As synonymous with our race, according to the teaching of the Gospel that Humanity is one, — the body of which Christ is the head: as when the Apostle says to the Ephesians (v. 25, 27) that "Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, . . . that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish;" and to the Colossians (i. 17, 18), "He is before all things, and by him all things consist, and he is the head of the body, the Church." 2. As meaning the whole organized family of Christian faith: as when our Lord says, referring to Peter's confession of his Messiahship, "On this rock I will build my Church;" and as when the Apostle says to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xii. 28), "God hath set some in the Church, first, apostles," etc., and to the Ephesians (iii. 21), "Unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages." 3. As indicating any body of believers, formally pledged to Christ, and organized for his service, with conditions of membership, means of improvement, and rules of discipline: as when our Lord said, speaking of the course to be pursued in the case of an offending member, "Tell it unto the Church" (Matt. xviii. 17); and as the word is most commonly employed. And besides these, though I am not aware of any instance in which the New Testament literally so employs it, — unless Heb. xii. 23, be such an instance, — there is still another sense in which we are taught by the spirit of the New Testament to use the word, — viz., as meaning the whole multitude of awakened and reconciled souls, — the vast company of the redeemed on

earth and in heaven, the Church invisible: a sense nowhere, perhaps, better illustrated than in Charles Wesley's fine hymn, —

"The saints on earth and those above
But one communion make:
Joined to their Lord in bonds of love,
All of his grace partake.

"One family, we dwell in him;
One Church, above, beneath, —
Though now divided by the flood,
The swelling flood of death.

"One army of the living God, —
To His command we bow;
Part of the host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now."

But while these different senses of the word are all to be borne in mind, and we are, on occasion, to make due account of them, the one meaning technically and most commonly intended by THE CHURCH is, the organized religious life of Christendom, — Christianity institutionally embodied. In the broadest sense, it is never to be forgotten, the Church is not specially a Christian institution. It is "the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" — the symbol of faith in God, and of righteous purpose towards Him. As such, it has existed from the hour that a human heart was first awakened towards God, and found other hearts to associate with it. Spiritually, this Church has included all of every age and nation, whatever the name or form of their worship, who, with any conception of the one true God, have aspired towards Him, and given themselves to His service. But organically, inasmuch as such are to be found mainly in the line of those to whom God's special revelations have come, it is in this line that the descent and history of the Church are to be traced. As far back as Noah, he and his family constituted the Church. To them succeeded the patriarchs, and to them, at length, the Jewish nation, as the people in covenant with God to recognize and obey Him, followed, in the fulness of time, by the Christian Church. The Church may thus be said to be coeval in its existence with that of our race, completing,

with the family and the state, the trinity of primary forms or institutions in which it has pleased God to organize mankind. The family organizes our domestic life; the state, our civil relations; the Church, our religious nature, worship and work; and if the family, or the state, can in any sense be spoken of as a Divine institution, with the authority of God for its sanction, in the same sense, the Church may be so pronounced. Nor can a claim be set up, or an argument be made, as to the legitimacy, necessity, or authority, of the family or the state — both which are on all hands conceded to have their foundation in nature itself — that cannot be paralleled and equally maintained in behalf of the Church. The Romish Church is organized on this postulate. Hence — for one reason — its power. It is one of the weaknesses of Protestanism that it has to so large an extent overlooked this fact — for, so far as it is overlooked, loss in respect to all those ends which the Church is intended to serve must ensue. The thing for *us* to understand, if we would attain to any measure of religious power, is the thing which has thus been so widely overlooked; and if we are to realize any such future as a Christian people as we easily may, we must renounce our looseness and indifference concerning the Church, and, awaking to perceive what it is as an ordinance of God and as one of the means of Christian efficiency, must put ourselves into solemn covenant with God and the Saviour in it, enforcing its authority, availing ourselves of its influence, and systematically employing every instrumentality which it supplies.

That the Church in this sense has the warrant of Christ's sanction and appointment — to go now no farther back — no intelligent person, reading the New Testament, can doubt. The "little flock" which he gathered on such stringent conditions shows us its origin; and the churches everywhere formed by the Apostles, as they went forth making converts to Christ, show us how it was continued and extended. Some have argued that it is not necessary to form churches, on the ground that the Church, in the New Testament sense, is the whole congregation. But it is certain that the Apostolic churches were something more than mere congregations. They were distinct, formally or-

ganized bodies, composed only of those openly committed to Christ, and responsible for discipline — usually embracing all acknowledged Christians, it is true, but only because all such regarded it as a duty thus to identify themselves with Christ, and were not recognized as really Christians until they had done so. To these can be lineally traced the churches of the present day.

It was impossible that Christianity should be preached as a living word without some such association of those believing it. Every live thing in this world, sooner or later, gets organized. A germ cannot be vital without assuming some form. A living embryo necessitates a body in which the living principle shall clothe itself. And the law of animal and vegetable existence, this is none the less true in the realm of ideas. Wherever men are in earnest, having living and positive convictions, whether in business, science, politics, or religion, organization in due time follows — loose and informal, or compact and thorough, according to their definiteness of aim and earnestness of purpose. The Church of God through all history, — the Christian Church as Christ organized it, and as it has since existed, is simply the result of this general law — as the family and the state are each the result of a similar necessity in their respective domains.

The parish, or religious society, comes about under this law as a partial organization of Christianity. It is the organization of Christianity as a theory, or as a public social interest, — the natural flowing together of those agreed as to the importance or desirableness of religious institutions, though they may not yet be ready to enter into formal personal covenant with Christ as their Redeemer; and the fact that no such 'society' exists where there is material for it, is demonstrative evidence that there are no positive favorable convictions among the people touching the subject. The Church is the same thing in a higher form. It is the organization of Christianity as a moral conviction. As such a conviction, taking hold of the conscience and the heart, Christianity is a very living and positive thing. As the consequence, wherever two or more persons, thus penetrated and vivified,

"Whose faith and hopes and hearts are one,"

are brought into circumstances of possible recognition, they will find each other; will gather around the same altar; will kneel together at the foot of the same cross, in confession of the same Saviour; will recognize a mutual obligation to aid and watch over each other; will pledge themselves to mutual fidelity, and use together whatever can help them to higher attainments in the Christian life; will ask each other's counsel, and, recognizing the authority inherent in such an association, will mutually submit themselves to rebuke and discipline, if, on any account, rebuke or discipline shall become necessary. And this, occur where it may, is *a* Church —a living branch of *the* One Church. Absolutely, neither written covenants, nor formulated creeds or canons, nor outward ordinances are essential to its existence. For purposes of convenience — that the platform of thought on which it rests, and the responsibilities assumed in uniting with it, may be definitely stated and understood, articles of faith and covenants are desirable; and since we need aids in religious culture as in everything else, ordinances have their importance; and because in religion no more than in business can the best results be attained without system and well-understood law, rules and methods are requisite if work is most effectually to be done. But the Church *may* exist independent of all these, — a spiritual conjunction of souls; and it does in fact so exist independent of these things, or it can have no existence with them.

There are those who do not like the *name*. But this is of little moment. The *thing* is the chief concern; and wherever the conditions meet, this will appear, demanding some designation. Christ called it the Church, and it may be doubted whether his nomenclature can be improved. But whether we call it by this name, or by some other, or by none, the fact will be the same. Bars may be put up, and bolts interposed, to prevent. Those concerned may be forbidden under heavy penalties to come together. A place to meet may be denied them; and they may be hedged about by every hinderance and restriction which bigotry or malice can invent. It will all avail nothing. *They will come together*. Bars will be overleaped. Penalties will be defied. Caves and by-places will become their temples for

worship. The street and the market will serve them as places of communion. And despite all efforts to the contrary, there will be hours when their hearts will mingle and burn in sacred sympathy, and when they will find help, encouragement and joy in the sweetness of mutual counsel, or in the uplifting power of mutual prayer.

It is, every way, most unfortunate that this natural and necessary origin of the Church is so almost universally overlooked, and that a conception so foreign to the fact prevails instead. The idea of most persons is that the Church is altogether formal and arbitrary ; — a kind of religious pound which somebody has invented, into which men and women, found at large in this world, are driven for safe keeping, until Death calls for and transfers them to Heaven. But all such ideas — in which even some church-members more or less participate — do great injustice to the Church, and utterly fail of any thought of its real nature and purpose. It is no walled enclosure, from which any are shut out. It is rather an open field, into which all gather whose hearts are in sympathy with Christ and with each other, and into which all are at liberty to gather who are attracted thither ; a spiritual household, open to all who are moved towards it, and who have the preparation which will make them at home in it. No doubt there are those who feel under an arbitrary restraint in the Church ; who find life in it irksome ; to whom it *is* a kind of pound, shutting them in from pursuits and associations which, at heart, they prefer, and all whose tastes and desires beat against the imaginary walls within which they are confined, as an imprisoned bird beats against the sides of its cage. But such persons have no real church-membership. Their church-connection is simply external and seeming, into which they have been brought by a fear of hell, or by some motive equally foreign to that which can alone put one actually into the Church. The genuine bond of church-union is not outward, but inward. It is a bond of spiritual sympathy, — the confession of spiritual attractions : just as it is no artificial contrivance but a subtile and unseen force, which unites a drop of water to its kindred drops, or assimilates into one body the separate particles of any human frame ; and only those thus

drawn into the Church as the home of their hearts, and whose outward church-membership is the sign of Christ's work in their souls, and of their inward consecration to him and their unity with all who love him, are really in the Church, or can be cited to illustrate what the Church is, or what it is fitted to do. What but this is the inmost meaning of the fact that no sooner does one become religiously awakened, than he begins to seek religious associations and to feel drawn towards the Church as his spiritual home, — while no sooner does his heart grow cold and his religious interest decline, than his sympathy with the Church declines, and he more or less withdraws from it?

Christianity itself is founded in human nature; and only, we may be sure, because the Church is thus in accordance with nature, having its origin and foundation in this ineradicable law of spiritual affinity and attraction, did our Lord recognize it as the fitting organization of his religion, and make membership in it at once the privilege and the duty of all who love him. And if, amidst the hazards and sacrifices which discipleship cost in his time, and the times immediately following, so many were made heroic in superiority to all considerations of personal safety, under the impulse of a faith and love that clasped him as Lord, and thus found themselves flowing together in the sympathy of a common purpose to own and serve him, how should it be in these later times, when no hazards bristle and no such sacrifices are required? Unfortunately, however, while it is true that all in whom the work of Christian faith and spiritual awakening has proceeded up to a certain point, are instinctively, by this law of spiritual affinity and attraction, impelled to find corresponding associations in the Church, the far greater number professing faith in Christ fail to reach this point of awakening, and so, failing to feel this propulsion towards the Church, fail to find their way into it as they ought. This is the sad fact concerning the great majority of Protestant Christendom, and is *the* fact with which Protestantism is called to deal as it never yet has been dealt with.

Romanism has solved one side of the problem of the Church. It has shown what a power for good — and for

evil — the Church may be, as an absolute authority dominating reason and subordinating our whole nature to a passive faith. Gathering "into its perfumed and symbolic shrines those believing natures, those leaning and devout souls to whom a too naked Protestantism denies any food for the religious imagination," — obtaining the possession and mastery of its votaries so as to command their loyalty, money and attendance on public worship, as no other form of Christian faith ever has done, and producing, under favorable conditions, some of the sweetest and saintliest lives that have ever blossomed amidst the selfishness, or shed their fragrance into the moral miasms, of the world, it has nevertheless proved a failure as an element of popular life and general civilization, because, in the very nature of the authority it asserts, inimical to free thought, to popular education, to a rugged self-reliance, to enterprise, to civil liberty, and so unfavorable alike to material, intellectual, moral and social progress. The beggary, ignorance and general shiftlessness of all Catholic communities, in the ratio of their vassalage to Church-rule — to say nothing of the lawlessness and barbarism of large numbers whom it fails to hold, or of the pauperism and crime with which it is so shockingly flooding our American society — give the sad but unanswerable verdict of history against Catholicism, alike as an interpretation of the offices of the Church and as a ministry to the spiritual needs of the world.

Can Protestantism more successfully solve both sides of the problem? Can it show what the Church is divinely appointed to be as a guiding and helpful influence, appealing equally to reason and to faith, and harmonizing them in a Church-life, the blended product of the two? Morally and religiously, this is the Providential question of the hour. Thus far, it has to be confessed, Protestantism has but complemented the failure of Catholicism, by solving the problem on the other side. While it has deserved to have many things said in its praise, and has shown itself especially favorable to liberty, to self-respect, to a busy and thriving material enterprise and to intellectual progress, it has at the same time shown how little mere brain or argument can do to serve the highest spiritual ends. It has demonstrated

that appeals solely to reason, or to logic, are, in their way, as unproductive of good, and as likely to issue in evil, as appeals only to faith. It has fostered self-assertion ; has induced denial, and cultivated doubt. Unlike Catholicism, educating the people to feel themselves strangers and foreigners to the Church, it has led them to feel that the Church is nothing to them, or they to it, till some supernatural crisis in their experience puts them into new relations to God, and makes it proper that they should claim to be among His saints. It has thus destroyed the hold of the Church on the people's hearts ; has induced the feeling that it is for those perfected, and not for those needing help ; and so has not only divested it in the popular apprehension of anything like authority, but has weakened its appeals, destroyed its attractions, and made it something quite else than the spiritual home and beneficent aid which it was designed to be. In a word, stripping away the tinsel and the drapery with which Catholicism has upholstered religion and the Church, Protestantism has left the first a dogma rather than a sentiment, and made the latter only a form instead of a living and pregnant fact. As the result, the Church as it stands to-day in the thought of the great mass of Protestantdom is a mere voluntary human association, with no special sanction or authority, into which it is simply well enough for those to go who feel so inclined, and not a Divine institution, sacred and venerable, with essential uses as the channel of spiritual influence, and rightfully demanding the homage, membership and service of every soul believing in God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Is Protestantism equal to the task of correcting all this — its own work, and of so interpreting the Church and its claims and purposes as to insure for it its legitimate hold upon the reason and faith of the people ? If not, Protestantism is to prove as signal a failure as Romanism, because proving incompetent to enthrone religion in the life of the people, and thus to organize them for the service of Christ in his Church.

It is not, in my judgment, an open question whether what is called 'evangelical' Protestantism is thus to fail. Except as it modifies its fundamental ideas, and commits itself to new expositions, — both of the truth of Christ and of the

relations and uses of the Church, — it must fail. The Past sufficiently attests this; and one of the purposes of the Universalist Church, in the Providence of God, I believe, is so to interpret what the Church is, and so to press what it demands as, in this failure of 'evangelical' Protestantism, to supply what the time in this respect requires. Universalism harmonizes reason and faith, and is thus able to present an ideal of the Church equally satisfying to both. It, and it alone, gives us the Church republicanized; and only the right awakening of Universalists to the meaning of the truth they profess, and therefore to the meaning and offices of the Church, is required to insure a result so much to be desired. Hitherto, as was sufficiently intimated in the opening of this chapter, Universalists have not given the Church the place in their regards to which it is entitled. On the contrary, some of the worst influences of Protestantism in this respect have come to fruit among us; and owing to the indifference, to the unjustifiable self-distrust, or to the prejudices and misconceptions thus begotten, we have been conspicuously behind most others in the signs of Church-interest and Church-life.

On the one hand, we have had those — no very large number — who have decried or neglected the Church altogether, and, on the other, those who have so advocated it as to make it of little or no account. The former, on various grounds, have said, We will have no Church; the latter have said, Let us have the Church, but, to conciliate opposition, or secure members, have lowered the standard of its requirements, and cheapened the significance of its vows. I have known large additions to some of our Churches thus procured — only to increase the Church in form, while lessening it in moral power, placing those entering it in a false position because ostensibly committing them to that in which they saw no meaning, and for which they had neither sympathy nor care. The result has been disastrous in many ways. Henceforward all this must cease, or ere another century, though our truth will remain, we shall denominationally have run our course. The world needs, and *must* have, the Church as the perpetual symbol of religious ideas, and as the means of communicating spiritual life. There

can be no permanence of religious influence or results without it; and the people who are religiously to possess the Future are the people who, having the most of truth and religious life, shall best comprehend how to make the Church legitimately a power, and use it accordingly. This possession of the Future will be ours, if we do not blindly and perversely throw it away; but it can be ours only on this condition, viz., that we organize ourselves in the Church spirit, and seek to become a Church after Christ's ideal.

Not that we are to dispense with our parish organizations. They are desirable and important in their place. Some among us are urging that they should be discontinued, and that the Church should be the sole primary body. But our General Convention, at Gloucester, committed itself very decidedly against this view. As a part of the Report on the revision of our fundamental law there submitted, a draft for the Constitution and By-laws of a Church organized on this plan was presented; but the Convention almost unanimously refused to sanction it, or even to allow it to be published. It thus unmistakably declared in favor of the parish *and* the Church, as together constituting the best method for our primary organization; and though as one of the committee who reported the draft referred to, I was personally disposed, in deference to those who think such an organization best, to submit the draft for their use, my very strong conviction was that the system which the Convention thus approved is on every account wisest in principle as well as most expedient in practice. The spirit of our American institutions demands that every one sympathizing with our ideas, who contributes to the support of a congregation, shall be entitled to a voice in the management of its affairs; and it is easy to see that the larger the number who can be actually enlisted in our work the better. Nor is there any reason why a good man, fully committed to our 'Confession,' and liberally paying his money to maintain a parish, should either be debarred the privilege of an active participation in its business because he does not yet feel prepared to enter the Church, or be compelled, for the sake of having this privilege, to connect himself with the Church before he is ready. The temporalities of a congregation are equally the

concern of all connected with it, and, on a proper basis, the accruing rights should be denied to no one.

But while the parish should be continued, it should on all hands be understood that it can in no way fill the place, or answer the uses, of the Church. True, as a Christian body, it ought always to mean Christian faith and moral uprightness, and by whatever name it may be called, it is not a Christian parish if care is not taken that it shall mean both these; but these, in the nature of the case, are all that it can mean. The Church alone stands not simply for faith, but for religious experience and purpose; for the love of Christ and consecration to him; for an awakened sense of God, and a formal assumption of religious vows. Nor, it deserves to be said, is it among the least of the reasons why the parish and the Church should be distinct bodies, that only thus can this purely religious significance of the Church be best maintained. Where there is no parish, and any voice in the administration of the financial and business affairs of the congregation can be had alone by Church-members, a motive is furnished to induce Church-membership that is wholly foreign to its real purpose. On this account most Churches organized on this basis have those in their membership whose hearts have never had the slightest religious awakening, and whose membership means only that they desire, or that others desire for them, the right to participate in the offices and business of the organizations; and I have heard of instances in which Churches so constituted have been recruited by considerable numbers solely to carry some measure for which they were willing to vote. What meaning or worth has church-membership so induced? Were there nothing else, the argument thus suggested would seem to me enough to determine judgment against the Church as the sole body, and in favor of the dual method so decidedly recommended by our Convention. In this particular I have made a study of the subject through a pastorate of several years where the Church is the sole organization, and, as the result, all my former convictions have been strengthened, and I am more than ever satisfied of the wisdom of the Convention in approving the method it did. The Church has a peculiar character, and is not what Christ

means by the Church except as this is maintained. As the Church, it is God's specific means for organizing souls in consecration to Him. It may have adjuncts and auxiliaries — the more of the right sort the better. But it alone embodies Christianity for its best work either in those who believe it, or for its warfare against sin, and is the conduit through which flows the largest measure of enlightening and redemptive power for the quickening and salvation of the world. And this being so, nothing, on the one hand, should be permitted to impair or qualify this distinctive purpose of the Church, and, on the other, every individual stirred to any becoming sense of God, or to any love for Christ, should instinctively gravitate towards it, as the heart of a child towards the home of its love.

It is in the due recognition and emphasis of these two facts that we are to see our special work in respect to the Church; and only as we give them this recognition and emphasis, and thus distinctly and systematically cultivate the Church spirit, and work to Church ends, can we either so interpret the Church itself, or so press its demands, as to make OUR CHURCH the required answer to the needs of the time. The important inquiry demanding our attention is, How shall we best do this? and on what grounds shall our claim for the Church be built, and the obligations towards it be enforced?

The ultimate end to be aimed at, it is clear after what has been said, is, to put the Church into its legitimate place with the family and the State, in the thought and affections of the people. Catholicism has done this, after its fashion; and herein, for one reason, as was just now said, has lain its power. It has suffered nobody reached by its teachings to think of the Church as artificial or adventitious, or as something in which they could possibly have no concern. The Church is organic, primal, its position has been — no less than the family or the State. On this foundation Romanism has always built. Hence, it insists, every child born of Catholic parents is born into the Catholic Church, just as it is born into the family of which it is a member, or into the State of which it is a subject or citizen; every convert to its creed is, of course, by virtue of his or her conversion,

another recruit for the Church; and every child born out of it on whom it can lay its hands in baptism is by this act inducted into its guardianship, and becomes its possession. Catholicism knows nothing of outsiders among those bearing its name, or to whom it can by any means lay claim. As the result, every boy or girl of Catholic parentage, every child acquired, every proselyte, every person of whatever age, within the line of its instruction, is trained to feel, I am of the Church: the Church belongs to me, and I belong to it; all its associations and traditions, all its saints and holy martyrs, all that makes it honorable because of what it has done, and venerable as the daughter of God and the bride of the Lamb, are but parts of my possessions, as all its gorgeous ritual, and all its precious privileges, and all the truth of which it is the keeper, and all its historic days and festivals are for my help and salvation; and because of what it thus is to me, and of what I am to it, I am to love, to honor, to serve it as I do my parents, my country, my God — am to glory in it as my chief pride, counting it my highest duty to live faithful to it, and willing, if need be, to die for it.

And thus instructing and impressing all whom it can bring within its influence, what wonder that Catholicism so grasps and holds its millions by ties stronger than hooks of steel, or that it wields so tremendous a power because the object of an attachment so intense, and of a loyalty so supreme? In all this, it is easy to see, there are elements of superstition, and of spiritual domination and slavery, which, building on reason as well as on faith, we totally abjure; nor is it ever to be forgotten, in speaking of Catholicism and its influence, how low and arbitrary are the motives on which it largely relies, nor what flocks of its adherents, so devoted to their Church and its worship, have only the hollowest form of religious service, while religion itself seems to have no place, as a principle, in their thought or life. But after all the abatements thus required, — and they are many, — here, in substance, if there be any reality in the Church, is the true theory concerning it and our relations and obligations to it; and it is for us, if we would have our Church a Church in fact as well as in name, carefully to study the Romish Church, and its methods, and the

secret of its power, and, so far as we can in accordance with the better genius and nobler aims of our faith, to act upon them. Only on this condition is anything possible to us as a Church.

There are those who are greatly enamoured with the externals of Catholicism — its sacerdotal pomps and processions, its imposing ceremonies, its music, and all the sensational appeals through which it addresses eye and ear and the religious imagination. In these, they suppose, chiefly resides its power, and in an imitation of these, they would have us believe, is our only hope of making any Church really churchly and effective. But such, I am satisfied, mistake, looking too much on the surface. These things, no doubt, have their influence — perhaps more than some of us suppose. But the ritual, drapery and elaborate sacerdotalism of Rome are mainly of the past. Only its better spirit is of all time. In this, therefore, we are to find the chief explanation of its power; and it is this that we most need to study and to copy. I have no doubt, indeed, that we might with great profit relieve the barrenness of our Protestant church-edifices by the introduction of appropriate pictures and statuary, and might add much to the religious helpfulness of our services by congregational singing, and by whatever else would suitably tend to make them services for worship, and not mere preaching-meetings. But I am fully persuaded that any man, or any body of men, will in vain essay to transfer the gowns and robes and chasubles, the genuflexions and ecclesiasticisms, the reading-desks and ritual of Catholicism or of High Church Episcopalianism, into the Church that is to come, or attempt to put the fresh, rationalistic life of Protestantism into the effete forms of Romanism. The rising David cannot be clothed in the armor of the doomed Saul. The Church of the Future is to be a vitalized Protestant Church, and not a rejuvenated Roman Catholic Church with the Pope left out. New ideals must clothe themselves in new forms. David must wear his own armor, and do his better work in his better way. But excluding all that is inconsistent either with our ideas of motive, or with our notions of liberty and the right of private judgment, and speaking only of what is unobjec-

tionable to us in Catholicism as to the spirit and practical sagacity of its methods, as to Church-ideas and underlying principles, as to winning, formative, holding power, *these*, as Catholicism has combined and availed itself of them, are essential and permanent, and have rendered the Romish Church one of the most wonderful organizations for effective religious work — perhaps *the* most wonderful that the world has ever seen. These we can, and should, copy; and so far as we do so, educating our people and others into the accruing conception of the Church, and its work, and its relations to the religious life of the world, and the authority it is entitled to exercise, and the uses it should be made to serve, we shall approximate the true ideal of the Church as to form, and find ourselves fulfilling the offices and wielding the fitting power of a Church as to fact. Then Universalists will feel something more than a mere temporary local or personal attachment to particular parishes or ministers. Wherever they go, they will carry with them a sense of permanent and organic membership in the UNIVERSALIST CHURCH, binding them to identify themselves with the nearest Universalist fellowship, and not permitting them, as they now so often do, to drift on removal into other connections, or to be lost in no connection. Then we shall have a Church fulfilling all Church offices, "baptizing infancy, not as a family custom, but as a Church sacrament; confirming the children, and taking them into its more immediate bosom as they attain adult years; making both marriage and burial rites of the immediate altar; and giving back to the Holy Communion something of the sanctity which two centuries have been trying to dispel, without gaining anything except the prospect of its extinction." The Episcopal Church and some other Protestant Churches are to some extent realizing this ideal. Our 'Children's Sunday,' baptizing our children as the children of the Church, to be in due time confirmed in their Church privileges, is a step in the right direction. Let other steps as fast as practicable follow; and in due time the world will see the result in THE UNIVERSALIST CHURCH, organized and thoroughly doing its work as a CHURCH indeed.

In the mean time, keeping this constantly in view, and

sedulously shaping our action and methods with reference to the end to be thus reached, we are to neglect nothing that will duly direct attention to the Church, and keep it before the people as the objective point of all our efforts, so far as forms and outward helps are concerned. Our one purpose and earnest labor must be to familiarize all whom we can reach with the obligations to a religious life; to quicken and educate our children and people into a becoming sense of what the Church is, and what are its claims; and to press on them the fact that only as what has heretofore been called the Universalist denomination is spiritually consolidated into a CHURCH, whatever other organizations we may have, can we be the people God is calling for, or enter into the inheritance offered us.

There are various grounds on which we may do this. Among them may be mentioned, —

1. The fact that respect for the example and authority of Christ and his Apostles demands a regard for the Church and identification with it. That he instituted, and that they continued, the Church, and that alike he and they call all who believe on him into it, the New Testament everywhere shows. How, then, if we confess any obligation to heed their teaching, can we neglect what they so enjoin? Mere conditions or accessories may, indeed, be changed, or disregarded, according to circumstances; but the essential institution itself — how can we fail to accord to this what it calls for, without in effect declaring that we think ourselves wiser than they from whom it comes? "I can be as good out of the Church as in it," some are fond of saying. But why then did Christ institute it? He did not establish it for a few, nor except for some good reason, we may be sure. It is no more necessary for one than for another; has no claims on one that it has not on all; and if one may be justified in its neglect, or in thinking it of no use, then all may be, and the Church may properly cease for lack of members! But this cannot be. The outward Church is the body and symbol of the spiritual family of which Christ is head, and of which all united to him in faith and love are members. He knew what was in man, and this outward Church was instituted, his action certifies us, and the

Lord's Supper was given — not as indifferent things, mere forms, which Christians are at liberty to employ or not, as they may choose, but only because there were essential uses for them to serve. And if they have such uses in the case of one, they have them not less for all; and if one is under obligation to defer to Christ's judgment as to what was necessary and best, and cannot fail to do so without disrespect to him and those who succeeded to the administration of his kingdom, why is not the same equally true of all?

2. Moreover, how is Christianity to be organized in its positive, spiritual purpose, without the Church? It is "nothing until an institution." Reference has sufficiently been made to the distinction between the parish and the Church. The former, as I hope has appeared, is expedient, and often necessary, for its specific uses; but it is a mere legal body, meaning simply faith in the truth of Christianity and an upright moral life. The Church embodies Christianity in its highest meaning — as a religious experience, a religious purpose, a power for religious consecration. Is Christianity to be denied such representation? Everything else, as we have seen, is organized: shall Christ alone fail to have the advantage of the association of his friends in direct and personal committal to him?

3. Still further: Out of the Church, there is, unfortunately, little keen sense of obligation to live in personal nearness to Christ, in a religious life. Church-membership, it is true, creates no such obligation. The obligation is original and absolute, preceding all churches and all church-vows. Church-membership is merely the confession of it, and the pledging of one's self to try to live as it demands. But without the Church, there is seldom any such confession. A general sense of moral responsibility does, we know, exist outside the Church, but till the Church is entered, all purely religious obligations set lightly on the conscience. No pledges to a religious life are understood to be given, and no expectations of such a life are felt to be warranted. This is a state of things, we may well say, that should not exist. But it does exist. Who that is out of Church-relations, reading these pages, does not feel somewhat less bound to live piously and prayerfully than

though the vows of church-membership had been solemnly assumed? Uniting with a Church, one is really no more bound to such a life than before; but it is at once felt that responsibility is intensified, if not created. A formal profession has been made; pledges of consecration have been plighted; certain expectations are felt to be justified; and naturally, one has a corresponding sense of obligation to live accordingly.

And should there not be something to bring us into this state of feeling? Who does not need all the healthful restraints and all the legitimate aids and stimulants to right living that can possibly be supplied? Who will say that it is a matter of small consequence that the Gospel has been given us, or that Christ has done so much for us? And if these are not small things, who will say that we do not need all that can in any way fitly serve to keep us sensible of them, deepening our consciousness of obligation, and kindling and impelling us to careful and studied Christian living? Is not the Church, then, a necessity?

4. Nor is this all. Independent of this increased sense of responsibility which it nurtures, the Church is an important help towards the Christian life through the closer and more sympathetic relations into which it brings its members; through the occasions for prayer and religious conversation, counsel and encouragement which it supplies; through the mutual watchfulness which it enjoins; and especially through the communion of the Lord's Supper to which it invites. Without the Church, there would be none of these things, as the Church gives them. And how much would thus be lost in the loss — especially of the Lord's Supper — which, without the Church, would inevitably ensue!

These are some of the considerations in view of which the Church is commended to our attention, and by which it is made the duty of every Christian believer, and especially of every Universalist, to be in its membership, in earnest and working sympathy with its purpose to conquer and absorb the world. But the great consideration, after all, is that which has been the underlying thought of this chapter, — viz., that the Church is the natural and organic relation of souls born into the kingdom of God through the minis-

try of His Son; that it is the channel through which God communicates His Holy Spirit and saving power most directly and potently for the enlightenment and redemption of souls; and that only in it can we put ourselves into best contact with spiritual influences, or best express our faith and love and Christian purpose. This is the fact that renders all other considerations comparatively unimportant, and that, giving the Church its high vantage-ground as an ordinance of God, summons all who believe in Him, or in the Saviour He has sent, to say, with one heart and one voice, —

"I love Thy Church, O God!
Her walls before Thee stand,
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,
And graven on Thy hand.

"For her my tears shall fall;
For her my prayers ascend;
To her my cares and toils be given,
Till toils and cares shall end.

"Beyond my highest joy
I prize her heavenly ways —
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,
Her hymns of love and praise."

True, the Church may be abused; — what good thing may not be? Its obligations may not always be kept; — what obligations are? It may be joined in self-righteousness and with airs of pretentious piety; — what institution may not have unworthy members? It may be said — it *is* sometimes said — that the Church is exclusive, and sets up improper distinctions; but whose fault is it if it makes distinctions, or if the many are out, and only the few are in it? The doors are open; all are under equal obligation to comply with the terms of membership, and are invited and urged to enter. Who are to be blamed if all do not enter? Those who identify themselves with the Church, in the true church-spirit, make no pretensions to a superior goodness, — put on no airs, — set themselves in no way above their neighbors. They simply say, We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and desire to consecrate ourselves to him. They go into the Church not because they think themselves good enough, or

wish to separate themselves from others, but because they wish formally to commit themselves to Christ, and desire the help of the Church to make them better. And who will question their right, or deny them the privilege of doing so, especially when their plea with each one who has not done so is, "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good?"

The subject is large and invites still further unfolding. But I will not extend the chapter. Even from this imperfect presentation of it, is it not clear that there is far more in it than many bearing our name have ever imagined, and that in no particular are we more urgently called to a New Departure than in our estimates, work, and denominational conscience with reference to the Church? Grant all that can be alleged as to the improving tendencies of thought among us in this regard, how long could we go on as we are, with our present ratio of church-membership and our present average of heedlessness and neglect, and have any standing, or exert any power, as a people of God? The question God is asking us is, whether we will be true to our ideas. The Church is one of the means through which we are to give our answer. What shall it be? God help us, that the answer be right.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

A GREAT change has taken place in the general sentiment of our body touching the Sunday-school. In consequence of that reaction from the *methods* as well as the *doctrines* of the old churches, which has been several times referred to in the progress of these pages — and without a constant recognition of which no person can to much purpose study our history, because missing one of the most important keys to it — there was a time when Sunday-schools were energetically opposed among us. They were regarded as a priestly and sectarian device to stay the progress of more rational and Scriptural opinions, and to fasten the chains of 'orthodoxy' upon the children and youth of the land: — objectionable in principle, because designed unwarrantably to bias the thought of those under their influence, and especially objectionable in practice, because a portion of the plot to create 'a religious party' in our politics. This opposition, however, on various grounds, gradually gave way — at first, mainly on the ground of expediency, that we might checkmate 'our opposers' by keeping our children out of their hands; and since then, as juster estimates have prevailed, we have had numerous new departures in respect to the subject, until now no Church is more appreciative than ours of the intrinsic importance of the Sunday-school, or of the soundness of the principle on which it rests, — or more zealous to use it, — or more earnest in discussing the question of methods, — or more occupied with the effort to make the school in the highest degree effective. Nowhere, probably, can there be found a change so marked, — nowhere, certainly, a change more marked or more favorable, in the growth of right thinking and feeling in these regards, than we thus exhibit.

Under these circumstances, it would be only a waste of

words to use room here to set forth the history of the Sunday-school, or to speak of its importance and great possible usefulness, or to dwell on the necessity of availing ourselves of every possible instrumentality towards making the most of it. All these, and others of a kindred nature, are points concerning which so much has been said that none of those into whose hands this book is likely to fall need information or suggestion concerning them. Nor is there now such special occasion as when this work was planned, to urge as a New Departure the particular recommendation to which this chapter is to be devoted. It has, fortunately, already arrested considerable attention, and has commanded, during the two years past, earnest pens and tongues, so that what I have to say on this point must be regarded as a humble contribution to help on a tendency of thought and labor which has already begun, rather than an initiation of it.

The one thought here to be presented concerns the *purpose* of Sunday-school instruction, — the paramount, absorbing end to which the school, and all it has, and all it can be made, should be devoted. Preliminary to this, however, there are two other points concerning which many years of observation incline me to offer some hints.

1. Our venerable and good Father Balfour, though finally in favor of Sunday-schools on the ground of expediency which has been spoken of, — i. e., as a means of self-protection, was never, I think, an advocate of them, *in themselves*, and always regarded them with some misgivings, for the reason that he feared their effect in inclining parents to neglect the religious instruction of their children at home. And who that has considered the subject will hesitate to say that he had good reason for his fears? That altogether too many parents *do* permit the Sunday-school to take the place of their personal labors, contenting themselves with feeling that, since their children 'go every Sunday to Sunday-school,' there is little occasion for them to concern themselves about their moral, and especially their religious, training, is known to us all. Herein — if I may so say — is the great possible mischief of the Sunday-school: — for that anything which serves to render parents less keenly alive to

their own obligations to 'bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,' or to lessen, no matter how slightly, their sense of responsibility in this respect, is, — in this, and so far as it does it — mischievous, no one with any becoming conception of parental duty will dispute.

On some accounts, the parental are the most solemn and — in a sense — most appalling of all the obligations that can rest upon us. For, consider what a child is as it comes fresh from the hand of God, — an immortal soul, with so much depending for itself and others on what it becomes, and with issues so tremendous, stretching out, we know not how widely, — stretching on, we know not how far, as the consequences of its life, and then think how serious a thing it is to take it for education and guidance, — to give it impress and direction, to form its tastes, to determine its habits, to shape its character, and so, under God, in a large degree, to decide what shall be its experience and temporal destiny, and to what purpose of good or ill it shall be in the world! One may well tremble, and ask God's special grace and help, in assuming such a trust. And yet, how few seem to have any due comprehension of it! How lightly, how thoughtlessly, with what total carelessness and unconcern, most to whom it is given take it upon themselves! It is one of the saddest things in the world that it is so; and seeing to what unreflective arms children commonly come, and how they are accepted and trifled with, we have occasion only to wonder that more lives are not perverted, and more souls spoiled and lost.

Were it, then, a necessity of the Sunday-school, in however remote a degree, that parents should transfer to it their duty, and that it should thus foster an unconcern and neglect of which there is already, by so vast a sum, too much, not only should we be justified in Father Balfour's misgivings concerning it, but the number, I think, would be small who would not, with intense emphasis, unite to say, Away with it utterly as it now exists, and let us have parental fidelity instead. In such a case, those who have no virtuous homes and no parents to instruct them, and whose only opportunity for religious training is that which the Sunday-school supplies, would somehow have to be otherwise provided for;

but as now constituted, the Sunday-school would be no more. Happily, however, the Sunday-school in no way necessitates such parental neglect, — only furnishes the occasion for increased thoughtfulness and more systematic attention ; and the father or mother who, instead of accepting its help, permits it to become a substitute, and so to induce carelessness and neglect, is not simply recreant to duty, but is further responsible for abusing instead of using a beneficent means of Christian education. Every parent making any pretence to conscience or Christian faith, — above all, every Universalist parent should count it a privilege as well as an obligation to sit down, some time each week, with the child, or children, God has given, and talk about the lesson of the Sundays past and that of the Sunday to come — making it a point to see that every lesson is perfectly committed, and that each child, having been helped to understand and feel the instruction which the lesson is designed to convey, is ready to ask the teacher such questions as it suggests, and thus prepared to appropriate whatever the teacher or the school may further supply. Would all parents but do this, what a work would be achieved ! It is one of the chief hinderances and discouragements of faithful teachers that it is not done. Let not those who fail to do it be surprised if, in after years, the bitter cup of children's waywardness and irreligion be put to their lips.

Shall we not have more thought among our parents touching this subject? Far too many of our children and our schools are suffering from the neglect and the substitution to which I refer. Must they, — *shall* they continue to suffer? Will not our parents resolve on a New Departure in this particular? Napoleon said that France most of all needed mothers ; and the great need of this country and the world, to-day and always, is the right kind of homes. And considering our own children, and their relation to the future of our Church, were I called to specify what, for their sake, and the Church's sake, and the world's sake, we most need, I should say, A profounder consciousness of the meaning of fatherhood and motherhood ; a keener sense of the solemnity and almost awfulness of parental responsibility ; and a more earnest and prayerful endeavor to make

Home as the nursery of character what it ought to be. Home is the chief power, after all. In vain, comparatively, our Sunday-schools and our Churches, if we have not Homes sanctified to God and the Saviour, and made fragrant by daily religious living.

Nor is this all. Not only, our parents should consider, is any child irretrievably the loser so far as it is denied — shall we not rather say, defrauded of? — the helps to a good life which its home should give, but it is impossible that our Sunday-schools shall ever be what they may be, until our parents heartily enlist with our pastors and teachers in the effort to give them their due character and power. "The teacher *must* have the *coincidence* of the parents," said a certain Major Malaprop, some years ago, making the customary committee-man's address at the annual examination of a public school, not many miles from Boston. He meant *co-operation*. And what he wished to enforce, and what all friends of education agree must be enforced, as a condition of the highest usefulness of our common schools, needs no less to be enforced in respect to our Sunday-schools. Only as parent, teacher and school work together are the best results possible; and so far as any parent withholds the needed co-operation in careful home instruction, or fails, because of the Sunday-school, to give a child the religious guidance and training which the parental office implies, not only does the child suffer and is God defied and nature outraged, but a course is pursued which — supposing the duty would be performed if there were no Sunday-school — renders the existence of the Sunday-school a calamity instead of a blessing.

2. The Sunday-school is simply one of the auxiliaries of the Church, — one of the means through which the Church works, or through which its members or friends work to church-ends. Of course, then, it should be supported and used accordingly. But who of us does not know that it is not so supported and used? On the one hand, far too many in our congregations and churches treat it as if it were in no way a general concern, but something outside, — a separate affair, on whose meetings, or anniversaries, they are not to be expected to attend; something to be maintained by such

'young people' and others as are disposed so to use their time, and that must pay its own way, and get help as it can, with no right as an integral part of the parish or church to look to it for support. On the other hand — and to a considerable extent, in consequence of the state of feeling just described, there are those connected with our schools, who conduct them on much the same assumption. The idea of unity and identity is lost. The school is managed as if it were in itself an end, and as if it and the church or the parish were — not one, but independent and rival organizations. I have heard of superintendents, whose aim was to get up Sunday-school cliques, or factions, for the furtherance of special Sunday-school projects, with little or no regard to the common welfare. I have heard of teachers, who habitually absented themselves from public worship, saying, "O, I don't care for the church or the congregation; my interest is in the Sunday-school." To the same effect, children are, in many places, taught to consider the Sunday-school as *their* church, and are given to understand that, when its sessions are closed, the church-services have nothing for them, and that they are at liberty to go home. And in still other cases, I have known the Sunday-school to become so far a 'hobby,' and so to absorb the leading thought and energy of a congregation, that, while its affairs were looked after with great discretion and earnestness, all parish business and interests were left mainly to take care of themselves, and so of course to come to serious harm.

Can it be necessary to say that all this, whether on one side or the other, is wrong and tends only to evil? If the Sunday-school has a right to exist at all, it clearly has a right to demand the sympathy and support needful that it may exist to best effect, — and this not simply from one, or a few, but from all. But the claim to these is all that it has a right to assert. It should know its place, and keep it. It is an appendage, an instrument, and this only. It is a means, not an end. Attempting to be more than this, it is an intrusion and an impertinence. It has no independent existence. It is not a church for children, or anybody else — and false impressions are made, and harm is done,

when, for any purpose, it is so represented. It is in no sense a distinct, or separate, interest — and whoever undertakes to administer or to serve it as if it were, not only exhibits a culpable ignorance as to its true office, but is false to every purpose for which it has a right to be, no less than to the broader concerns to which it is subordinate. As a religious institution, the Sunday-school is nothing of itself. The church alone makes it legitimate, and gives it significance. The church is the parent; the Sunday-school is the child. The church is the fountain; the Sunday-school is one of its streams, — or, if we liken the church to the ocean, Sunday-schools are some of the rivers flowing into it. It is altogether subsidiary and dependent, designed to serve the church, and having any claim upon the church only because its office is to serve it.

Our Sunday-schools can never be most useful until these things are severally understood and properly acted upon. Why can they not be so understood and acted upon in reference to all our schools, as they already are in the case of some of them? No words can exaggerate the possible power of the Sunday-school. For this reason, it should be made a regular department of the parish or church work. It should every year, no less than the minister or the choir, be financially provided for, and so be saved the shifts and expedients to which it is now so frequently compelled to resort. It should, as much as the rental of pews, be looked after by some Advisory Committee of the parish or the church. It should never appeal in vain to the members of the congregation for teachers or workers, or for their attendance on any occasion when its claims are to be presented, its reports submitted, or its work discussed; and last, but not least, it should by common consent be understood to have a right to insist on the attendance of every child in the parish, old enough to attend, and no less, of every youth, and of every adult who can possibly arrange to participate in its lessons: — *for the Sunday-school will never realize its true ideal so long as it is supposed to exist only for children, and fails to be regarded as a School of Christian Instruction, designed equally for all who can learn, however mature or aged.* In a word, the Sunday-school should be taken

close to the hearts of all our people as one of the most important of our church-instrumentalities, and should receive every practicable sign of an appreciative sympathy from all who can, in any way, contribute to its numbers or usefulness. Whoever fails to give it what it thus deserves and demands, fails of duty in respect to one of the most vital conditions of our increasing hold upon the world.

And not less should those actively connected with our schools be mindful of what is demanded of them. Appreciating the real relations and work of the Sunday-school, they should diligently seek to make it tributary to the growth of the congregation, to the increase of an interest in public worship, and thus to the enlargement of the church. Regarding it as their first duty to make their instructions as profitable as possible to those under their charge, they should feel that they are the servants of the church, and that the one question for them is, not how to build up a distinct or partisan school-feeling, or how to make the most of the school, as if it were or could be the rival of the parish or church, or as if it were in itself something to work for, but how most perfectly to identify the school with the common work and welfare of the parish and the church, and how to make the most of it for parish and church ends. Can we not have these things earnestly and practically recognized alike by those outside and by those inside our schools, and thus see our Sunday-schools everywhere becoming what, as helpers and auxiliaries of the parish and the church, they might and ought to be?

But these observations have outrun my design. They are, as I said, only preliminary. The question to which I wish here particularly to direct attention is, *What is the final purpose of the Sunday-school?*

Whatever may have been true of exceptional minds, thinking of what the Sunday-school *ought to be*, it is to be doubted whether there has been, until recently, any clear idea in answer to this question in the minds of those who have done our Sunday-school work; and it is quite as much to be doubted whether any considerable number of those who are even now doing it would be found to have concep-

tions at all definite upon the subject. It is well to have Sunday-schools, the idea has been and quite too commonly still is, because they have come to be recognized as very proper things, and because it is really desirable that our children should know something about God, and the Bible, and the truths and places and events and people and duties of which the Bible speaks. And so, as was intimated in our second chapter, we have for years been teaching, in a very mixed and miscellaneous way, Scripture Geography and Biography and Archæology and Doctrine and Duty, and have accepted as teachers any tolerably worthy young persons who were willing, or who, by persistent solicitation, could be coaxed, to enlist in the work, whether they were in the church, or out, — whether they had any clear and intelligent views of doctrine and duty, or not. And all to what effect? It would doubtless be too much to intimate that no good has thus been done. But it is not too much to say that, as the rule, our scholars have failed to derive any *religious* benefit from what has thus been given them, beyond the moral impression which the singing and general exercises have made.

I have had three children as scholars in our Sunday-schools — one or more of them in three different schools; and as I have talked with them since they in their turn became Sunday-school workers, their testimony has agreed in this — viz., that, except in the case of one or two teachers, they *never gathered anything from the Sunday-school*, save in the way of these general impressions, and as the lessons were occasions of their learning something at home; and one of them was for months taken from a Sunday-school of which I was pastor, because the class of which he was a member was, beyond any remedy of mine, so left to itself after the merest parrotry of the words of the catechism, that, *in the class*, he was getting much injury and no good. And these children were by no means specially unfortunate. On the contrary, their teachers were, most of them, among the best in the several schools. Their experience, therefore, only illustrates the rule. The state of things it illustrates was never, perhaps, peculiar to us; but it has existed among us to a greater extent than in the

schools of other churches, because we have at no time been so advanced as to methods, and especially because we have failed of any such distinct idea as they have had as to the end which Sunday-school instruction should be made to answer. We have been improving in this department of our labor as in others. Probably it would not now be possible to find superintendents or teachers employed so utterly without regard to religious character and conditions as they were twenty, or even a less number of years ago — particularly in any of our older and better schools. But even now, to what extent would a careful census of our schools, not excepting our oldest and best, show their instructions to be directed to any purpose more specific than this — viz., to give the pupils some useful information about the Bible and the places, the people and the events, it records, and to help them to some intelligent conceptions of truth and duty as Christianity expounds them ?

But is this, or any part of it, at all as it should be ? Was it for any such teaching that Christ died, or that the Gospel was given ? To what end does the Bible teach ? In his letter to the Colossians (i. 28), speaking of ' Christ in them, the hope of glory,' Paul says, " Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man, *that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*" And who of us does not know that this sums up the burden of the whole New Testament as to the purpose of all Christian instruction ? Seed is sown for harvests. Leaven is hid in meal for results. So, not less, all teaching in the name of Christ, whether in the pulpit, the home, or the Sunday-school, is, or should be, with sole final reference to religious character. Christianity is a ministry of spiritual quickening and redemption ; and we have no right, in whatever capacity we serve as teachers, to use Christ's name anywhere, or to do anything professedly under the auspices of his religion, except with these results definitely in view.

Here, then, is something for us to think about, — a New Departure to which, with one consent, all our Sunday-schools should at once commit themselves. *Our Sunday-school instruction should henceforth aim at the specific spiritual results which it is the distinctive purpose of Christianity to*

secure. In this, as in many other things, our 'evangelical' friends set us an example well worth our following. Their guns are always aimed at one mark. Their business, under God, they believe, is to save souls; and conversion is the process through which, as they hold, salvation is to be reached. To convert souls, therefore, is their one engrossing purpose, whatever they do — their purpose in the Sunday-school, as in everything else. Hence their Sunday-school reports, whether for a term, a year, or a series of years, always mention the number of scholars who have been 'hopefully converted;' and whatever else they may have to report, no matter how favorable as to new scholars, or punctuality, or perfect lessons, or successful 'excursions,' 'concerts,' 'exhibitions,' 'festivals,' or 'good social times,' they regard their record as seriously incomplete, and feel that they have lamentably come short of their *real work,* unless they are able to say that some of their scholars have been religiously awakened, and thus have been converted, and led to give themselves to God and the Saviour in the Church.

And what they thus seek, according to their conception of Christian truth, is precisely what we should seek, according to ours. Why should we be less interested in such results, or seek them less earnestly than they? True, as was said in the chapter on the subject, we have no faith in their *theory* of conversion, and see no necessity for any such rescue as they mean by salvation. But, as was shown in the chapter referred to, we do not the less believe in conversion. Irreligion, worldliness, sin, is not a state with which we have any more reason than they to be content. An awakened spiritual consciousness, harmony with God, the sweet sense of acceptance with Him, is not a thing to be any less desired by us than by them. Nor do we the less recognize the reality or the necessity of Christ's saving work. On the contrary, to none are Christ and his awakening and redeeming offices so much, as related to the intrinsic need of the soul, as to us, and those in agreement with us. None have reason to insist with such strenuousness as we on what these two words, Conversion and Salvation, really mean, and to the faith or apprehension of none others are

the processes they signify so actual, so vital, so absolutely and eternally indispensable, as the conditions of highest spiritual welfare. As we have heretofore seen, there is no entrance into the best life but through the gate, or experience, which the Bible calls Conversion; and anywhere, only spiritual darkness, insensibility, and death are possible to any soul except as Christ quickens and saves it. What, then, shall we do? These being the facts, are they facts to be forgotten or disregarded, especially where the plastic nature of childhood is committed to our hands? Are we pardonable if we do not specifically and anxiously labor for the ends which we profess to regard as so essential? Or, can any Sunday-school, ostensibly representing these facts as the solemn verities they are in our *theory* of Religion, be justified before God, or at the judgment-seat of Christ, or at the bar even of serious and earnest public opinion, in giving them no attention, or in failing to make them the inspiration and basis of such special labor as they suggest and demand?

This is a subject on which I will not presume to speak for others. But, for myself, I cannot but hold it solemn and inexcusable trifling, to gather our children and youth for what is called 'Sunday-school instruction,' Sunday after Sunday, and year after year, to dribble into their minds smatterings of various superficial and non-essential knowledge, with little thought and no effort in the direction of that particular result which the New Testament everywhere presents as the grand purpose for which Christ came into the world, and without which any soul, whatever else it may have, fails of *the* experience into which it is the sole ultimate design of the Gospel to lead it. Christianity means the instruction and awakening of souls, that the life of God may flow into them; and this definitive purpose of Christianity determines what should be the purpose of every Sunday-school, and the prayerful effort of every Sunday-school teacher. Every child, every youth, every person, of whatever age, connected with a Sunday-school is a soul to be awakened and saved, to be made conscious of sin, and helped to penitence and the resources and joys of the regenerate life, — or, if awakened, is a soul to be helped and encouraged into higher

and clearer views of truth and duty, into a deeper experience, into a more perfect union with Christ, into a sweeter communion with God. I hold, therefore, that no session of a Sunday-school should pass, whatever else may be in hand, without some effort on the part of every teacher, and of all whose office it is to give tone to the service, to further this work of religious awakening, or help, in the hearts of the scholars. Instruction is good. Well-recited lessons and pleasant talk about them are good. Good singing is good. Anything that legitimately helps to give interest and life to a school is good. But all these are simply incidental. Not for any one, nor for all, of these does the Sunday-school, as a school of Christ, exist. It exists to convert and save souls. It exists spiritually to kindle and arouse those who can be brought within its influence; to impress them with a becoming sense of God's love and of Christ's self-sacrifice; to move them by the lessons and appeals of the Cross; to teach them not only to understand the *theory* of conversion and salvation, but to feel the necessity of being themselves converted, and of asking with solicitous concern, realizing how much is at stake on their right action, "What must I do to be saved?" It thus exists that it may make its pupils spiritually wiser; stimulate them to prayer, and the reading of the Bible, and attendance on public worship; aid them to self-mastery and self-denial; induce them to cultivate an amiable, genial, kindly spirit in their homes, and in all their relations and intercourse; and so help them to be live, earnest, consecrated men and women in Christ Jesus.

Nothing among us has for a long time seemed to me more gratifying in itself, or more promising as an indication of our growing religious development, than the 'Young People's Prayer Meetings,' in which the religious life of some of our parishes has of late found nutriment and expression. And the thought, aspiration, and purpose which have come to fruit in these meetings show us, as I conceive, precisely the product which, on the experimental and emotional side, our Sunday-schools should bear, as, on their practical side, they should come to fruit — and can be of any real Christian service only as they *do* come to fruit — in rightly-poised and high-toned character and devout and holy living. They

are our spiritual nurseries, designed to send out those who, as men and women, shall enrich the world with the graces and virtues of a sanctified character, while eager to do its righteous work under the leadership of Christ in covenant with God in the Church.

Taking this view of the Sunday-school, it hardly needs to be said what should be taught or done in it, or what its libraries, or papers, or entertainments should be. The test question with respect to these things, as of everything else connected with the school, is, What is their religious influence? or, What bearing have they on the religious purpose which the school must be made to answer? What the verdict must be, in an application of this test, as to the kind of teaching which our schools have usually furnished, is clear. We have had much discussion of late concerning the 'One Lesson System.' As a system, I have no doubt that alike the argument and the testimony of experience are on its side. But as to the point before us, the 'system' is a matter of no consequence. If the same themes and lines of instruction are to be continued, the 'One Lesson System' will avail no more to answer the real purpose of our schools than the incongruous system which we have heretofore had. If Scripture History, Geography and Biography and similar topics are to furnish the staple of our teaching, with a little spice of doctrine and morals mixed in, however the teaching may be given, the lack of religious point and result will be the same. In their place, indeed, these things are unquestionably important; but the place for them is not the Sunday-school, except as they are made incidental and tributary to its main business. As well might one apprenticed to a house-builder or a carriage-painter be taught about the history of forests and all the processes of their growth, or about the old painters and their subjects, and be led through all the fields of knowledge, however indirectly related to these callings, while the house or the carriage was entirely neglected. In the case of such an apprentice, as he leaves his master, the important question is not, how many other things has he learned, but, what kind of a workman has he been helped to be. Equally, the inquiry of chief interest concerning a Sunday-school, as its pupils go out from its

classes, is, not how much ground of Bible knowledge has it led them over, but, what has it done to convert and save them, and how far has it helped to impress them with the importance of Religion, and led them, as quickened and consecrated souls, into the discipleship of Christ. And any Sunday-school which has no such results to show, however large or prosperous, whatever else it may have done, or however numerous the pleasant social purposes it may have served, though it may have done some good, and so may deserve not to be condemned as a cumberer of the ground, is a grievous failure so far as the sole final purpose of a *Sunday-school* is concerned.

How many Sunday-schools have we that are answering — or that are making it the one purpose of their existence to answer — this real end of their existence? Alas, how few! Do we not need, then, — shall we not have, the New Departure in this regard to which the highest welfare alike of our children, our Church, and the world is calling us? The hope of our Church is in its Christianized children — as the hope of the world is in the Christianized men and women that Sunday-schools and churches are putting into it. In some schools, by some teachers, it is our pleasure to say, this Departure has already been taken; and as I pen these words, there rises before my thought the class of one such teacher, whom it is my privilege to know, who is finely illustrating what this Departure is, and what it would do for us. He is a young man, himself penetrated to the quick of his being with the thought of God and living a life of prayer and of conscientious devotion to every duty. His class is large. When he took it, it was in some respects one of the least desirable classes in the school; but, coming to his work with his heart in it, he soon inoculated the class with a new life. His one business, he feels, is to lead his boys to the Saviour. Though going carefully over the letter of each day's lesson, therefore, he does it only to get at its spirit; and, gathering the heads and hearts of his scholars about his own as he talks, as bits of steel cluster about a magnet, whatever the topic, he makes it somehow suggestive of thought about God, or Christ, or goodness, about the perils of sin or the attractions of a religious life. He talks

much about prayer and the importance of cultivating a sense of God's constant nearness. Inviting his scholars' confidence, he induces them to open their hearts and confess their faults to him, and thus obtains a familiarity with each one that enables him to see what the boy most needs, and how he can best adapt instruction to his case. He visits his scholars at their homes, so making the acquaintance, and enlisting the sympathy and, to some extent, the cooperation, of the parents. He seeks opportunities to converse privately with each scholar, that he may speak with the freedom and faithfulness which he counts it his duty to exercise. In every possible way, in school and out, he so identifies himself with his boys as to secure their affection, and then uses the power he thus acquires to direct their hearts to God, to pledge them to daily prayer, to awaken a love for the Saviour, and to educate them towards the Church. In these several ways, so far as he can, he seeks to advance them every Sabbath somewhat into that life of devout thought and purpose, in the ripening of which they will become the reflective, reverent, religiously consecrated young men that he feels himself charged of God, by His help, to make them. Who can estimate his power or the power of any such teacher, or compute what our schools would at once become if all our teachers were actuated by a like purpose, and were as carefully and prayerfully laboring to the same end? Some imagine that such religious teachers must repel their scholars. On the contrary, the rule is, as this young man illustrates, that such teachers most interest and attract. The school of which this one is a member has many faithful and excellent teachers; but into no other class is there such an anxiety to enter as there is to enter his.

Shall the lesson of this case, and of similar cases, be heeded? The Sunday-school, even with those among whom it has reached its best estate, is yet in its infancy. Its capacity for usefulness has only begun to be perceived. Its full possibilities nobody understands. Systems and methods are to be developed, of which even the wisest do not now dream, multiplying its resources and increasing its grasp and power. And as what is now potential becomes

actual in it, it is more and more to place the world in its debt, because of what it will do for the churches that wisely use it, and for our Christian civilization as one of its mightiest and most beneficent factors. Out of it are to come — who can tell what ministers, what statesmen, what men and women of all ranks and orders of gift and character, to make life, home, business, politics, society witnesses of Christ's increasing presence in them? Is the Universalist Church among the churches which it is thus to feed, invigorate and bless? I trust in God that it is. I am sure that it is. With our simple, rational, satisfying faith, so fitted to the comprehension of the young, and so full of power, rightly administered, to stir all hearts, kindling them into religious life, it *may* be the means of blessing us, if we so will, beyond all others. But it can so bless us only as this New Departure is taken, and as, learning from our own experience and the experience of others what are the best methods, we make all methods and all instructions focalize in this one great end — the religious awakening, the conversion and salvation of souls. Then, growing constantly wiser, our schools will each year become larger in numbers, because more vital and enthusiastic in spirit, and more effective as a Christian influence, because possessed by a more definite Christian purpose — training each generation, in its turn, as fresh recruits for Christ, honorably and valiantly to bear the banner of the Cross, and, through their own conversion and salvation, to help on the conversion and salvation of the world.

CHAPTER XVI.

MAN AND WOMAN.

God has halved our Humanity into man and woman; and only as the halves are united, of the twain making one, can our Humanity be complete. Herein is the wonderful peculiarity of Christ. In him, "there is neither male nor female." By this, primarily, it was doubtless meant to say that he knows no distinction of sex, as he knows nothing of condition or race, among his disciples, because, in the fellowship of a common faith, and in the equal blessings and privileges of a common salvation, all are one in him. But since he is alike the example of both, the statement must also have been designed somehow to include the idea that as the humanity common to all nations is summed up in him, so not less are the distinctive qualities of the two sexes. He is not simply a perfect man. In character, he is just as much the perfect woman also. How else could he be an example to women?

No human being, either as a man, or as a woman, distinctively, can fitly represent the globular wholeness of our nature. Solely as a man, Christ could not. Only a life perfectly blending man and woman can do this; and this is what Christ — and he alone — does. He is the union of the two sides of our nature, — the consummate flower of its finest and grandest possibilities; not simply *a* man, but Man, — Humanity come to full expression in all that makes it at once most human and most divine. Analyze him morally, and see — on the one hand, the unconquerable force; the tough, persistent will; "the iron firmness, resisting temptation; the courage and self-possession that never quailed; the integrity that never paltered; the justice that never gave way to any mere sentiment or weakness of feeling;" the vigor, energy and strength that made him always so stout and invincible, so calm and self-sustained, — and on the other hand, the love

so fond; the tenderness so sympathetic; the tears so ready to flow; "the considerate care which provided bread for the multitude, and said to the tired disciples as with a sister's rather than a brother's thoughtfulness, 'Come ye apart, and rest awhile;'" the shrinking sensitiveness; the retiring modesty, withdrawing from needless observation; the nervous susceptibility to sorrow and pain; the meek and patient submissiveness to a superior will. Here, plainly, are two very distinct sides, or 'poles,' of character; but, save in their union, how could we have had the Life which now stands out at once so noble and massive, and yet so winning and beautiful, — so masculine, and yet so feminine, in our Lord?

And blending thus so marvellously the man and the woman in his human completeness, Christ suggests the natural relations of the two sexes as the complements of each other, and especially illustrates how they are intended to mingle and supplement each other in life, and what is the law of all right character and all best work.

As to Character, we all know what occurs when men are long separated from the tempering and refining influence of cultivated and virtuous women. They grow rough, coarse, boorish, barbarized. In like manner, consequences different, but analogous, show themselves in women when long separated from high-toned and intelligent masculine society. Hence the grave mistake of those who would divide the sexes in schools, colleges, or anywhere — except in prisons. Such results show that God has made them to dwell together, to act and re-act on each other, and that the conditions of best culture are violated when some other arrangement is substituted for His.* And exemplifying the reciprocal influence of the sexes, and the necessity for it, these results as distinctly intimate how the qualities of the two need to be interchanged. As our Lord could not have

* Talking, a little while since, with a student, home on his vacation, about college life, and how 'the boys' deport themselves at table and elsewhere, I could not but think how much would be gained to save them from the coarseness and boorishness thus described, were the refining presence of intelligent young ladies introduced among them.

been the Christ he is except as the union of the two, so always. No man is most perfectly a man save as he has, also, something of the woman in him; and no woman is most perfectly a woman save as she includes, also, something of the man. Anything but a perfect character follows in either case, indeed, if the man is so much of a woman as to lose his masculine distinctiveness, becoming only a feminine man, or if the woman, in a like predominance of the man, becomes a masculine woman. Such a product is not simply an anomaly; it is a violation of all the fitness and harmonies of nature, and cannot fail somehow to prove unfortunate, or mischievous, as well as unnatural. What is required is that the exclusively masculine qualities in the man shall be flavored and chastened by those that are womanly, and that the purely feminine in the woman shall be re-enforced and strengthened by those that are manly.

It is at this, as one form of his work, that Christ is constantly aiming in respect to us all; and in no terms, perhaps, can the change which Christianity has wrought, in tempering, refining and ennobling life and law, be better described than by saying that it has thus transfused each of the sexes with something of the qualities of the other, — teaching woman the lesson of self-respect, giving new vigor to her will, new earnestness to her aspirations, a new sense of obligation to her conscience, a larger culture to her understanding, and an increased consciousness of individuality, independence, and distinct accountability to her life, — and infusing a gentleness, tenderness, and purity into the life of man never known before. The same work must still more widely and positively go on, if the regeneration of the world is to go on; and only as it does go on, and men are mellowed and softened with womanly graces, and women catch a masculine self-reliance, individuality and force, can either attain the style of character that fulfils the purpose of their being, or best approach their common model, Christ.

And what is thus true as to Character, is no less true as to Work. In union there is strength; and the greatest strength can be given to any good cause, important ends of any sort can be most quickly or certainly reached, only as man and

woman mingle and co-operate in the effort. Of what avail would have been all that men could do for the salvation of our republic, had the women of the North been disloyal in our late contest with treason, or had they withheld their sympathy and moral encouragement and support from the loyal side? At the South, it was woman — mistaken, but sincere, impassioned, ready for any sacrifice, that fed the fires of rebellion and gave inspiration and strength to the traitorous struggle; and at the North, it was only because the women were no less true than the men — ready to work, — ready to pray, — ready to say to husbands, sons and brothers, Stay not for us; go, and do your duty for your country's sake, — ready to go themselves to watch and serve in the hospital, to minister in the camp, and to be like angels of mercy even amidst the carnage of the battle-field, that liberty triumphed, and that the Union stands. And this but indicates the universal rule. I remember that, some years ago, the men of New England undertook to build a monument on Bunker Hill. They began with much enthusiasm. Then the money gave out, and they were compelled to stop. Again, after a while, they rallied, and, gathering more means, carried the work a little farther. But soon they had to halt again; and there, above the sacred old battle-ground, the half-finished structure stood for years the shame of our American patriotism, and the especial mortification of all New England. At length, the women took hold, and ere long, men and women working together, the money was raised, and the monument was done.

So always — as the societies and philanthropies, of various names, that are most a success to-day, all over the civilized world, effectually tell. Tract societies, Missionary societies, Bible societies, asylums and charities — who needs to be told how much less all these would be as compared with what they are, if either men or women had undertaken alone to found and to further them? The masculine and feminine forces are co-ordinate. *In concurrence* they are the powers God has appointed for moving and recreating the world; and only as, *concurring*, they put themselves as one to it, is any of life's best work most efficiently accomplished. Is it not a fact of suggestive import, that even in the great work

of the world's redemption God invoked the instrumentality of woman, because man alone could not inaugurate or complete it, and that, "born of a woman," he who was to be the image of God, drawing all men unto him, was her contribution to the sublime enterprise?

Nor, important as both are, is there any ground for legitimate dispute as to which takes precedence in importance. He would be not only a presumptuous, but a foolish man, who, analyzing the character of Christ, should venture to have any opinion, or even to raise the question, as to which of the two sides so manifest in it is the more important. Both are important, equally so — since without either, there could be no Christ. And not less is the presumption, or the folly, of those who, considering the offices to which man and woman have been respectively appointed, dare to debate as if one or the other could have precedence. The distinction of sex runs through all creation, and without either, all would perish. In many particulars, — in all, so far as humanity, and not sex, asserts itself, the uses, needs, and employments of man and woman are either identical, or interchangeable; but that, as man and woman, there are different spheres for which they are fitted, — different duties for which they are designed, — different avocations which they can most appropriately pursue, is evident. This, however, argues no inequality, nor does it intimate that either is more necessary or important than the other. The mother and the father, — the brother and the sister, — the husband and the wife, — he who builds ships, or sweats at the forge, and she who plies the needle, — the toiler in the counting-room, at the bench, or on the farm, and the mistress of the home — who will undertake to draw a line between these, and to say which occupies the prouder or the humbler position, or which acts the part most requisite in the grand economy of life? As well might the sunlight and the air get up a quarrel as to their relative importance! For myself, I confess that I have no words duly to express my disgust at all such discussions, or my sense of their baselessness and impropriety; and especially does it awaken my wonder and disgust, when I hear women so lost to self-respect and a

just appreciation of the dignity and glory of a true womanhood, as to talk as if what have hitherto been regarded as man's peculiar pursuits and avocations were in any respect more noble or dignified, or more worthy the honorable ambition of an aspiring woman, than those to which, as a woman, she has been appointed. Shame on the man, who, forgetting his wife or his mother, for a moment indulges the thought that woman is not, in every attribute and office, at least fully his peer; and shame even more on the woman, who, in a discontented itching to be something other than she is, dishonors her sex by disparaging its fitting employments, and, croaking as to the ignobleness of her limitations, vainly apes the life of a man, in open or secret rebellion against God for making her a woman.

Denials, it is true, there are of woman's individuality, and discriminations against her rights — though among these, in my judgment, the right to vote is *not* included — of which, the relics of that condition of bondage and inferiority out of which Christianity has lifted her, woman has just reason to complain, and for the correction of which woman and all fair-minded men should strenuously insist and persistently agitate.

Traditional notions, too, there are, as to what employments woman may fittingly adopt, against which all women, and men in their behalf, have no less reason to remonstrate and rebel. In former years, the lines thus drawn were so restricted that women were not unfrequently compelled to repress themselves in the non-use of special gifts in the exercise of which they might have attained eminence, or to confine themselves to avocations already so crowded as to leave no room for large numbers except to starve, or beg, or sell themselves to sin. Latterly, these lines have been somewhat extended, and women have been overstepping the old boundaries and getting into pursuits and industries that would once have been thought quite improper for them. But there is still too much of the old traditional estimate surviving. The whole world is open for woman just as much as for man, and there is no arbitrary or conventional rule to be set up as to what she may or may not do. Any gift is a Divine call to its use; and to be in the world is to

have the right to choose how, honestly, to earn our bread. Whatever she can do, therefore, woman may properly feel herself at liberty to do, *due regard being had to natural proprieties and constitutional limitations.* A man who should strangely get the idea that it is his office to bear children, or to do 'dress-making' or 'plain sewing,' or to keep house instead of his wife, or to do any one of a thousand similar things, we should say, had somehow become morbid or twisted in his estimate of his fitting employment; and whatever fondness or ability he might urge, we should tell him, could better find exercise in something more appropriately masculine. And so, equally, a woman, who should as strangely think herself called to build or to sail ships as her life-calling, or to make roads, to erect houses, to quarry rocks, to run locomotives, to sit in the senate, to plead at the bar, or to do anything else so evidently outside the feminine province, however she might aver a native taste or ability for it, would invite a similar judgment, and could as properly receive like advice. Evidently, as just now said, there is a *masculine* and there is a *feminine* sphere. But with only this qualification, founded in nature itself, it is for woman no less than for man to enter the field of all possible employment, and to walk where she will, following the bent of her genius, or electing as she prefers, whether it be to paint pictures or to chisel statues, to compose songs or to sing them, to write or to 'keep' books, to deliver lectures, to set types, to sell merchandise, to count money, to ply the needle, or to do whatever else she will. So that the employment be but honest and useful, it will be its own vindication as becoming and womanly, and will thus sufficiently vindicate her for pursuing it.

But these unjust discriminations and false ideas being corrected, it is for both men and women, sitting at the feet of nature, to see that their respective offices and lines of service have been as wisely appointed as they are distinctly marked; that, as just now remarked, they are *co-ordinate*, neither having the pre-eminence as assigned to offices more dignified or more important than the other, since both are equally indispensable; and that they are alike most worthy and honorable when, in no spirit of jealousy, and no sour or

flippant aping of each other, but in a spirit of mutual self-respect and co-operation, — man *as* man, woman *as* woman, — they stand each, reverently and helpfully, in the lot God has prescribed, and seek to glorify it by a faithful discharge of the duties it imposes.

Whatever is to be done can best be done as man and woman thus work together. But in nothing are the conjunction and co-operation to which they are so called more needful than in labors for church-interests; and in the New Departure to which we are summoned, if we are to be most efficient as a Christian Church, more account will have to be made of this fact, and more thorough and systematic means will have to be employed to provide for and secure this co-operation. Not that I mean to intimate any intentional neglect of woman hitherto as an element of power in our Church, nor that we have been particularly behind other churches in recognizing the importance of her influence, or seeking to enlist it. I mean only that, with us as with most other churches, there has been no systematic effort in this direction. Like others, indeed, we have had our sewing societies, and fairs, and festivals, — in all of which, of course, woman has been a party. She has had her place, moreover, — in many instances, a most important place, — in the Sunday-school. But, aside from these, she has been left without any special sense of responsibility, because she has been left to feel that there was nothing else for her to do. It is for us, in the time to come, if we would be most and do most as a Church, to amend our methods in this particular; to assign woman equally with man something to do; and to have it understood that, in all things, she is to be systematically an active participant in our Church work.

But how shall this be done? A quite vigorous demonstration has of late been made among us in the direction of a woman ministry; and no small press of influence has been used by some of those favorable to it to induce all women who could be so persuaded to go into the pulpit. Is this to be a part of woman's new work hereafter for our Church? My own very decided conviction is, No. I have great faith in woman, but no faith in a woman ministry.

Not that I have no faith in woman's right to speak, if she has anything to say, and is moved to say it in public, either in the pulpit or anywhere else. I know not why she may not speak or pray, as well as sing, in public, if she can do it to edification; know not why it is not her province and her right — nay, if she feels so impressed, her duty — to do these things, or either of them, as much as it is, or can be, man's. The power to instruct or to move, either by written or spoken language, is not of sex, but of soul; and the possession of the power is God's warranty for its use. Some of the prayers that have taken me nearest heaven have been the outpouring of woman's devotion; and some of the most eloquent and impressive utterances it has been my good fortune to hear have come burning from woman's heart and brain, in liquid fire from woman's lips. Who shall forbid such women — or any woman who can do it — either the privilege or the right to carry souls to the Father's throne on the wings of their prayers, or to kindle and inspire us with their messages of instruction, or their pleadings for truth and the right, whatever the theme on which they may choose to speak, or the place in which they may prefer to stand? Not I, surely, 'lest haply' I 'be found to fight against God.'

But to speak or to pray in public as convenience suits, or as occasion demands, is one thing; to make the ministry a profession, and to be formally set apart to the pastoral office, is quite another: and, with all deference to my preaching sisters, many of whom it is my privilege to know, and most of whom I hold in high esteem, I am compelled to confess that the propriety of the latter does not by any means seem to me to follow from the rightfulness of the former. To do the former is to follow God's intimations, in a legitimate use of gifts He has bestowed; to do the latter, I cannot but think, is to overlook evident hinderances and disqualifications in woman's very constitution, physical if not moral, and is thus totally to disregard the fitness of things. Every woman choosing the ministry as her life-work deliberately renounces offices for which she was intended, or proposes to accept these offices only to make incidental and secondary the paramount and

sacred duties which they involve. A woman ministry, therefore, in the sense of adopting the ministry as a profession, is out of the order of nature. It is forbidden by intrinsic impediments and constitutional restraints and limitations. It is, and in the nature of the case always must be, an anomaly. For this reason, it is winning us no respect. It is helping us to no hold on the best and most thoughtful minds — only serving to confirm the false impression that we are an unbalanced and visionary people, given to crotchets, and ready to adopt every vagary that may assert itself, or seem to promise us help to get up a sensation. Despite immediate appearances anywhere, it is doing us no good, having regard to the interests of our cause 'in the long run;' and, whatever special efforts, or spasmodic tendencies, may temporarily do to push recruits into it, or whatever popularity, or supposed legitimacy, ingenious special pleadings and inconsequent reasonings may avail for a while to give it, it can never be otherwise than exceptional, or command the cordial sympathy and support of any considerable number of intelligent people.

These being my convictions, I scarcely need further explain why it is not in the ministry that, looking to our New Departure, I see woman's work for our Church. Neither judgment nor conscience would permit me to encourage a woman to prepare for the ministry; and should one come to me, claiming to be prepared, and asking license, ordination, or installation, neither personally nor officially could I vote, or in any way assist, to give it. At the same time, it seems to me unwise to have any controversy upon the subject. The idea of a woman ministry is one of the numerous extravagances incident to all periods of agitation in respect to important principles, when, in the reaction from old mistakes or abuses, extreme, irrelevant, and therefore false, conclusions are jumped at from premises more or less sound. It belongs to the category of things against which it avails nothing to reason, because they are not matters of argument or reasoning, only of impulse or sentiment, — often of obstinate self-will. It will have its run, as many a similar idea has had, and then pass away. It is self-limited, and therefore self-doomed. Nature is not to be successfully

defied, whatever transient seemings may be; and, being against it, nature may be trusted, without much ado on our part, in time, to dispose of it.

And, having no faith in the pulpit as a fitting profession for woman, or in its work as her future work for the church, I have no more faith in the policy of her separate action which many of all churches are so ready to invoke, and which, notably, came in among us with our Centenary and has since been organized for permanence. The principle of separation is in effect — though, commonly, not so intended — that of disintegration. As such, it is not a good principle anywhere, if results which unity and consolidation can best produce are desired; and least of all is it a good principle for man and woman in work for the church. Let it be granted that some desirable ends may be gained through woman's separate action which could not be so fully realized without it. So some desirable ends might be accomplished if we should stir our rich men to have their separate action, — and our poor men to have theirs, — and our young people to have theirs, — and our children to have theirs, — and our people of brown hair to have theirs, — and those of light hair to have theirs — and so on, dividing and subdividing through all possible distinctions. No doubt there are those who could be reached and induced to contribute time and money on such a plan of procedure, who could not otherwise be interested. But how it would dishevel and segregate us! What a bundle of fragments it would make us! How it would impair and to a large extent destroy not only our sense of unity, but our spirit of co-operation! And what rivalries and jealousies and cross-purposes it would beget! It may be doubted whether any wise and practical friend of our Church, or of any church, would favor a proposition to organize on any such plan, whatever the immediate products it might promise. But if the principle of separate action for our women be sound and expedient, why not as sound and expedient for all the separate action that can be devised?

It is not separation, but aggregation that we want. The more thoroughly unified and compact we are, — the more

perfectly and systematically we can be brought to work together, not as many, but as one, the stronger we shall be, and the more we shall be able to accomplish. And true of all others, this is no less true of men and women. It is *in the concurrence* of the masculine and feminine forces, as was just now said, that God has provided for the power which most moves the world. The more these two forces are conjoined, making common cause, not merely with reference to the general ends to be furthered, but with reference to ways and means, the mightier they become. Any two persons, disposed to work, working together, will accomplish more than they can, working apart; and men and women — if the figure may be pardoned — hitched together, and pulling the same load in the same harness, will do vastly more than if each party insists on having its special load and its special harness. They will pull different sides, in different 'traces'; but it will be the same load, pulled to unspeakably greater effect. What do God's arrangements say to us? He does not set men in one company, and women in another. He puts them together — in families, in churches, in communities, everywhere: assigning them, it is true, to dissimilar duties, with 'diversities of gifts' and 'diversities of operations,' but with one common interest, and with their dissimilar duties only parts of one common work. Who doubts that all the interests involved are thus better served than though they had been organized apart? So we shall be strong in proportion as we can enlist their activity and co-operation on the same principle.

Let me not be misunderstood. I have been heartily glad to see our women alive to the necessity of somehow making themselves actively felt in our Church affairs, and for this reason have counted it a privilege to contribute as I could to the success of what they have undertaken. I do not wonder that they have tired — the earnest, devoted souls among them, of the policy — or rather, of the no-policy — which has prevailed among us, in common with other churches, with regard to them, and that they have been moved, alike by self-respect and by their love for the dear cause which is as much theirs as ours, to their separate organization, since, they had reason to suppose, this was the only way in which

they could really become participants in our general work. Better, far better such action than none; and if the question to-day were, Shall the women do nothing, or shall they work by themselves as they are trying to do? I would say, By all means, though the principle of separation be not sound, and at the risk of all consequences, let them organize and do what they can. Life is better than lethargy, even though hazards must attend it. But while ready with all my heart to say this, and to thank God and them for whatever good work they have done, I am none the less satisfied that the principle on which they are now proceeding is a false one, certain to divide our sympathies, and likely to fritter our energies and to give rise to emulations, jealousies and misunderstandings not at all favorable to the union in which lies our strength. The question, happily, is not, Shall our women do nothing, or work by themselves? but, How shall we combine our resources, so as to make ourselves most effective? And, convinced that one of the answers to this question is to be found in the wise and thorough consolidation of our masculine and feminine forces, and not in their segregation, I make these suggestions, without any attempt thoroughly to discuss the subject, trusting that attention may be so called to the erroneous principle and what is likely to result from it, as to insure better action.

It seems to me a sad — and in some respects, a most unpromising — thing, that our women should be talking as if they were a distinct element in our Church, and as if it were desirable that they should, *as women*, show themselves "a power" in it. Is it forgotten that in Christ "there is neither male nor female"? As Universalists, the inquiry of chief interest concerning us is not whether we are men or women, but whether we are lovers of the truth, ready to work for it; and as lovers of the truth, ready to work for it, whether men or women, we should clasp hands, and give ourselves to our Church-work as one work. So far as our women have any definite aims, they are identical with those of our Convention. Why, then, split our work, needlessly multiplying calls for 'contributions,' dividing sympathy, and keeping two sets of machinery in motion? In *union* lies our greatest strength. Can we not have this

understood, and cease to parcel off our work as man's and woman's, and be done with these special "woman's" associations, appeals and contributions? Can we not organize and conduct all our enterprises, of whatever sort, as parts of one great whole, equally the concern of all, and showing that not men, and not women, *as such*, but souls consecrated to Christ, men and women, are the 'power' — and the only recognized power — in our Church? If we cannot, alas! for us. If we can, not only shall we escape most undesirable liabilities to which this separate system exposes us, but we shall secure a sense of unity and a practical co-operation and a harvest of results otherwise impossible.

And seeing nothing for our Church in a woman ministry, and more than doubting the wisdom or permanent usefulness of woman's separate action, I must further add that I have as little faith in any good as likely to come to our cause from the present tendency to constitute our Conventions of woman-delegates. Put into plain terms, this tendency amounts simply to this — a disposition, because men cannot be found willing to leave their business for such duties, to fill up our delegations with young girls and women, who, earnest and excellent in many respects, have little or no interest in the details of our Church-affairs, — have no acquaintance with business and no resources of practical judgment, and are thus destitute of the qualities without which neither dignity nor weight can be given to our representative bodies. It seems plain to me that only evil can come from such a state of things. What we need in this particular is to attract increased attention to these representative bodies, and to give them increased dignity and importance because of the intelligence, position, ripeness of judgment and elevated character of those who compose them. We have committed serious mistakes, and been much at fault, hitherto, in this department of our concerns. The rule, too frequently, has been that any reputable man, 'willing to go,' has been thought to be material suitable enough for a delegate. Our best men we have sometimes had, but not often. It is not so with other churches. As the rule, they send only their best men, and it is a sight well

worth beholding, to go into some of these bodies in session and see of what material they are constituted. Why should not our bodies be constituted with equal care to bring our wisest and weightiest representatives into them? Our best, our most thoughtful and cultivated, our most practically sagacious and eminent minds are the delegates we want, and that we should insist on having; and if there are women in our churches — as there are — belonging to this class of minds, thoughtful, practical, with a taste for business and a familiarity with our methods and work, with definite opinions and a willingness to express them, and *a disposition to attend faithfully to the duties of delegates*, by all means let us have them. They will add dignity, and character, and wisdom to our councils. But it can only issue every way in harm to us if women of a different type are sent; and so far as they *are* sent, and the immature, the flippant, the non-practical, those unwilling or unable to give serious attention to business *as* business, or incompetent to have or to express intelligent opinions touching the great interests that are, every year, more and more to demand the action of our delegated bodies, the men who ought to be in them will be disinclined to have part in our legislation, and these bodies will degenerate into mere gatherings for talk, worthy of little respect and commanding none.

What, then, is there for woman to do? and how is she, in our New Departure, more generally and more effectively to concur in labors for our Church? These are questions more easily asked, perhaps, than answered in set detail. But even if they were questions of the easiest answer, it would not fall within the province of these pages to answer at length, since the purpose here is to suggest needs, and, if possible, to awaken thought towards their supply, rather than to recommend particular methods in form. It will be enough if any word thus said shall stimulate to reflection upon this subject. Once induce this among our people, and plans and methods will soon follow.

Let it suffice now to remark, by way only of outline and suggestion, that every parish and every church should be organized on the principle of giving every member something

to do, and in the assignments of labor thus made, women equally with men should be appointed to duty. This will give in every congregation women as well as men for pastoral visitation and counsel, — for looking after the sick and the poor, — for waiting on outsiders whom it is desirable to bring in, and on new comers whom it is desirable to help feel at home, and on the lukewarm and absentees whom it is desirable to stir to better attendance and a new interest; — for soliciting money; — for talking up new and forward movements of whatever sort, and for furthering the common welfare in any way. Women, moreover, as well as men, should be looked to for their help in the Conference Meeting, and the meeting for prayer, and in whatever other work may be attempted to promote and deepen religious life.

Then our State Conventions and our General Convention should recognize women, just as much as men, as among their constituents, in appointing committees, in inviting suggestions, in the distribution of responsible duties for the furtherance of our cause. As an example of what might in this way be done, take the action of our General Convention, at its last session, in respect to the Missionary Box — a source of revenue which others, copying it from us, have made so productive, and which might be made equally productive for us, but concerning the best management of which there has been so much debate. After much discussion, the Convention, whose it is, and whose it should sacredly remain, wisely determined to put it — not into the hands of a separate Woman's Association as had been proposed, as if women were not an integral part of our Church, but into the hands of a committee, a majority of them women, who, in the name of the Convention, are to administer the Boxes in its behalf, and to cause them, through such agencies as may thus be appointed, to pour full streams, twice a year, into its treasury. Who doubts the result, should the women of the committee take vigorous hold of the business? Or, how better could our women be brought into direct and practical co-operation with the Convention, as part and parcel of it? This is mentioned only as one example of what might be done; but the example suggestively covers

the whole field, and indicates how, be it what it may that our Church proposes, whether educational-work, missionary-work, publication-work, or whatever else, our women may be enlisted, and be made as actually as men, and *directly with them*, participants in it.

Who can anticipate all that would follow from such a systematic enlistment of our women in all the activities of our Church, from our primary to our superior bodies, and in all the plans that may be proposed — never as an outsider, or as an auxiliary, but in organic identification with them? Imagine a congregation composed altogether of men, or altogether of women, or for the upbuilding of which there was no conjunction of the two in effort! What a different thing it would be from a congregation in which both were working earnestly and sympathetically together! And what is thus true as to the life and strength and prosperity insured to a single congregation or parish, by heartily enlisting women — not to get up side-operations, but to make common cause with their husbands, sons, and brothers for the furtherance of the common welfare, is equally true of a whole denomination. There are some things that men can do best; there are other things that women can do best; unite them, and in proportion as they have the real spirit of work, there is no such thing as failure in any labor to which they put their hands.

Be it ours wisely to heed this lesson, and thus, in this respect, to make the New Departure on which, as to our future, so much depends.

CHAPTER XVII.

UNITY.

In *organization,* the Universalist Church is happily one as never before — and as those of little faith, amidst our numerous and seemingly fruitless experiments, were accustomed to insist that we never could be.* We are at length unified in our General Convention, in a sense of common interests, in devotion to a common cause. Perhaps in nothing was our Centenary Year of greater advantage to us than

* I cannot forbear here to express regret, which must be shared by all who have most carefully studied the subject, at the disposition which has already showed itself in several localities to 'tinker' and modify the Plan of Organization adopted at Gloucester, before it has had an opportunity to prove itself. A 'uniform organization' was for years the desideratum demanded from all parts of our Zion, and by common consent it was agreed that the Gloucester Plan, the fruit of so much thought and labor, and adopted with such gratifying unanimity, had been fortunate in meeting this demand. It did not, perhaps, please any one in every minute particular. Certainly, nobody anticipated that it was perfect in all its details. But it was felt that its general principles were sound, and that, framed in the sincere effort, as far as possible, to meet and harmonize conflicting opinions, it was deserving a fair and thorough trial. It is to be lamented that this view seems not to have found universal acceptance. Some of the attempts to change the Plan, it is gratifying to know, have signally failed. But in other instances, local notions and individual theories have been permitted to mar the harmony of the system — fortunately, as yet, only in minor points, but enough to destroy the 'uniformity' so much desired, as soon as it seemed to be attained. It is safe to say that yet other uneasy theorists will propose their changes, anxious to mend what they would only help to spoil. Is it too much to suggest that all such further attempts for the present be quashed? Give the Plan time. Let experience demonstrate its imperfections. Then remedy them. Cannot the lesson be learned among us, that long-considered and laboriously-adjusted methods are not likely to be much improved by the hasty suggestions of a moment, or an hour, of debate; that no human instrument can be framed, in all points, to please every local preference, or individual fancy; and, above all, that, if we are to be a homogeneous Church, the wise way is for us to be content to accept what the general voice of our body approves? We can never be anything but a clumsy piece of patch-work, if we cannot learn this lesson.

in helping to nurture and consummate this feeling of Unity, and in thus consolidating us into One National Church. It did this in various ways, and in none, probably, more effectually than through the effort it incited to create the MURRAY FUND. We needed the money thus realized, and it will prove of immense use to us; but far beyond its value as so many thousand dollars, was the gain it brought us as, East, Midst, West, we together put ourselves to the task of building this Central Memorial Fund. It mattered little in this particular that some of the States did not come up to their quotas, and that, for this reason, the sum proposed was not fully realized. The moral effect was realized hardly less; and the talk about the Fund, the effort to raise it, and the fact that so much was done towards raising it, did more to pervade us with the sense of oneness we so much needed, and to knit us into a practical and heartily co-operative unity, than folios of resolutions, or months of mere preaching or argument, could have done: and as the CONVENTION, to the full extent of its ability, has set itself to work in the employment of the means thus furnished — thinking nothing of locality, thinking only how best to serve our one cause, this sense of unity has been still further promoted, as it will be yet more and more as the work goes on. In this respect, though doubtless there will be those, constitutionally sour, or crooked, or impracticable, who will snarlingly or factiously talk about 'ambition,' and 'centralization,' and 'the methods of the fathers,' the unity of our Church, extraordinaries excepted, will henceforth take care of itself. There is no occasion to speak here of its advantages, or to dwell on the importance of doing all we rightly can to foster and preserve it.

In another sense, however, this subject of Unity is one that is demanding our special attention, and concerning which we should at once resolve on a New Departure. As a people, we are in most respects pervaded by a kind and fraternal spirit — no people more; but in some other respects, this spirit is seriously lacking. We have too much clannishness, too much suspicion and jealousy, at our sectional centres; too much sensitiveness and covetous anxiety touching purely personal and local influence and ends.

Boston looks askance at New York, and Augusta nervously watches Boston, and Cincinnati is ready to take up any adverse criticism against 'Cornhill' or 'the Leader office,' and Chicago and 'the West' do not feel altogether right towards 'the East,' and 'the East' is not wholly without corresponding feelings towards 'the West.' Supposed business interests are mainly at the bottom of this state of things, though to these is added a half-unconscious local or sectional bias, that would be ashamed openly to confess itself, even to itself, but that nevertheless exists, and practically asserts itself as an undesirable element in our affairs. What is the consequence? The rivalries and competitions thus engendered come to a head in feuds and bickerings and mutual fault-findings and accusations, that are not at all creditable to us, and that are productive of anything rather than the unity, and cordial good understanding, and hearty co-operation, which alike the dignity and the welfare of our Church require. This was illustrated, not long ago, by the remark at one of our centres, "As for me, my interests are all here, at ——:" a remark happily rebuked in the reply, "I am glad to say I do not limit the work of the Lord in the earth to ——." Other examples, some of them more mortifying, might be mentioned. But I forbear.

Must this state of things continue? No lover of our Church can consider it without pain. The following extract from a letter, called forth by a specially mortifying illustration of this state of things, from a friend who has had long and favorable opportunity to become acquainted with and to study it in its various phases and operations, does but give voice to what is in many hearts concerning it: "This jealousy among brethren is the saddest thing I have ever known in our Church. If it were only a personal exhibition, it would deserve contempt; but its harmfulness to our cause fills me with sorrow. So out of sympathy am I with the entire spirit and tendency, that, if I were not sure that we stand for the eternal verities, and that, to make our Church worthy its high mission, we must stand inside and fight for it, I should be tempted to step quietly out from all this littleness that seems to have entered into us. Is it true that we who ought to be the noblest,

most generous, most tolerant, large-hearted and Christ-like people in the world, are the most self-seeking and little-souled? . . . Can we do nothing about it?"

This letter was for my private eye; but I have felt justified in using this portion of it, because it means so much touching the matter under treatment, and because it indicates why I have deemed the subject important enough to call for a separate chapter. The letter, as I have since personally said to the writer, was somewhat too much an overflow of feeling, unduly disheartened by the mortifying exhibition which suggested it. The idea of 'stepping out' of our Church, quietly or otherwise, because anything in it fails to go just as we would have it, is one not to be for a moment entertained by any brave or loyal soul. It is a Providential Church, not only 'standing for the eternal verities,' but called of God to a great work; and, except upon contingencies altogether improbable, it is the duty of every Universalist to stand by it, seeking to correct whatever in it may need correction, and giving every possible contribution of brain and heart to make it the efficient instrument in the world's redemption God would have it. And as to our being more 'self-seeking' or 'little-souled' than our neighbors of other Churches, there is no reason for any such thought. Looking as sharply behind their scenes as we do behind our own, we should find that they — the best of them — have their jealousies, heart-burnings and bickerings quite as much as we, — some of them far more; and one has only to read their papers to be furnished with evidence of bad temper as flagrant, and of narrowness and littleness as marked, as any that ours have ever shown. This is nothing to our credit, it is true, and in no way lessens our fault, or our danger, on account of these things so far as they exist among us. But it admonishes us not to do ourselves injustice by thinking that we are worse than we are, and suggests that the wrong in question comes from what is common to all in the weakness of our human nature, and not from any littleness or perversity peculiar to us.

But though the letter is open to criticism and deduction on these two points, its main burden is none the less weighty. The personal aims and feeling of which it speaks are not a

whit less serious or harmful than it avers. They are evil, and work only mischief, everywhere. Especially to our discredit, so far as they are suffered to have place among us, because so inconsistent with the spirit of our faith, they are inimical to every interest of our Church, as well as utterly at war with those relations which should be cultivated among brethren professing to love the same Lord, and to be devoted to the same great ends.

Jealousy and clannish feuds and selfish competitions, open or secret, are — does it need to be said? — necessarily elements of weakness always, as they are always signs of personal narrowness and littleness; and till they cease among us, and we come practically to that Unity which the cardinal principles of our faith demand, whatever else may be in our favor, we can never be the Church we should be ambitious to become, breathing all of us the inspiration of a common life, and marching to the music of one grand common purpose. A great common aim lifts all who really share it out of themselves and above any mercenariness of spirit, rendering them, in the enthusiasm that possesses them, incapable of feuds, or jealousies, or a mean regard to self, because blending them in the rhythm that makes all movement and feeling one. This is what we need, and is what we shall surely have, so far as the spirit of Christ as we interpret him takes possession of our hearts. And having it, how small and paltry will seem any thought of private, or personal, or local interests, such as now too much asserts itself, compared with the one great interest that rightfully claims to be supreme in our regards!

I deal with this subject in no fanciful or sentimental view of it. I overlook nothing that legitimately belongs to what is called the practical and business side of it. Some thoughtfulness of self, duly subordinated to what is paramount, we shall all agree, is not only allowable, but is a part of our duty; and Boston and Chicago and Augusta and Cincinnati and New York do well thus to think of themselves, and how they may each build up a business that shall benefit our cause and at the same time yield a fair return to their own pockets. But nobody has a patent on Universalism; nor is the Universalist Church, or any

portion of it, a field to be reaped, or a flock of sheep to be sheared, for anybody's particular benefit. A great deal would be gained if this could be understood. The assumption of something quite different from this is the fallacy which underlies most of our feuds and bickerings, and so gives chief occasion for the lack of unity here under notice. It seems strangely to have been taken for granted that individuals or establishments have a right virtually to divide our Church-field into farms, of which special ownership, and within which special 'rights' to do business and to make money, may be claimed, and that, if the lines of one of these several farms or divisions are crossed, lo! just reason is given to the special occupant for whining, remonstrance and jealous complaint. But on what basis of fact or common sense does any such assumption rest? Or, who or what are Augusta and Boston and Cincinnati and Chicago and New York, or either of them, that they should thus claim ownership of me, or of the church of which I am pastor, or of any other minister, or believer, or church in our communion? "The field is the world;" and 'an open field and fair play' is the only motto for those who undertake to do business in the name of Universalism, as it is for those engaged in any other honorable calling. Obligations of courtesy and gentlemanly dealing, of course, there are; but all good books, whatever their imprint, have an equal right to find buyers, and the best book is entitled to command the market. For like reasons, all religious journals have an equal right to invite and win subscribers wherever they can; and the best deserves to have the largest subscription list, whatever the locality in which it is published.

The thing to be served is not anybody's private interest, but Universalism, held by us as the truth of God; and the chief ends to be accomplished are not the profits of any establishment, but the extension and upbuilding of the Universalist Church. To these everything else is secondary; and these have a right to insist on the unobstructed service of the best instruments in their behalf, come they whence, or be they in whose hands, they may. If anybody can serve these, and in so doing serve themselves, well; but no person or establishment is warranted in setting up a special

claim to any particular portion of our field, demanding that others, whatever the merit of their wares, shall keep away from it, or in regarding anybody else as a trespasser, to be assailed with protests, or to be pelted with hard names, if, in an honorable way, he seeks to find patrons or customers in it. Could this but be once seen to be the true ground in respect to this subject, to be occupied in a common spirit of fraternal courtesy, the main cause of our jealousies and fretting discords would be gone. *Everything for Universalism, and nothing for persons or places except as secondary to it,* would be the cry of all our hearts ; and with free scope for brotherly competition in the effort to produce what is worthiest, all legitimate personal or local interests would find themselves harmonized and best promoted in the mutual regard for our truth and our Church which would make us one.

It was the dream of Horace Greeley's life, to see all our papers and publishing interests consolidated into an establishment that should unite our whole people in loyalty to it, issuing a journal worthy of our Church, and sending out books, tracts and periodicals broadcast over the land. He had his impracticable side ; but it is conceded that his judgment as to papers was worth something. Can we doubt, that could his dream be realized, it would do for us more than any other single agency could ? But the time is not ripe for this. Even if those now controlling our several publishing interests should be moved to come into the proposition, the personal, local, clannish element is yet so strong with some among us, that new proposals for papers would doubtless very soon be issued from these same sections, enforced by glowing appeals to local prejudice and local pride, and by frightful pictures of the dangers of 'centralization,' and, probably, by eloquent pleas for 'individual enterprise' ; and there would unquestionably be enough to respond as subscribers to put 'other Richmonds' into the field at once. So long as localism and a jealousy of 'centralization' at all survive among us, there will be those who will appeal to and seek to feed upon them. Such is human nature. And so long, it will be in vain — so far as any such result is immediately concerned — to set forth, no mat-

ter how clearly, the advantages of the consolidation which Mr. Greeley proposed, or to show how much better it is that the profits of our various publications should go into the treasury of our Church, for Church-extension and Church-work, than that they should go into the pockets of individuals, for their personal enrichment, whatever bonus they may be willing to pay for the sake of so enriching themselves. But truth and good sense will finally prevail. In this assurance, it is for those who believe in Mr. Greeley's general plan, to keep it in agitation, educating our people to see what would be gained by it, and so preparing for the time when our whole Church shall say, Enough of divided and personal publication interests. Let them coalesce, the possession of the Church, to help, by whatsoever they shall yield, to promote Church-ends. The amounts that some of our publishers are willing to pay for the sake of keeping the field only indicate the profits they make, and that might, on Mr. Greeley's plan, be realized for our Church-work.

In the mean time, let us resolve on the New Departure herein seen to be so demanded by every consideration touching our Church's welfare. The remedy for the state of things of which this chapter treats is in our hands. What a shame it is to us, and what evil is likely to come of it, are apparent. Let ministers and people, with one consent, unite to say, We will have no more of it, enforcing their command by means readily at hand, and which those mainly at fault will be sure to feel. If the people should resolve, and every sin against their resolve should be followed by a deluge of protests, ending with, *Cease, or stop my paper!* we may be sure their will would be speedily heeded. The word not only of the Apostle, but of the Master to us is, "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." Be it ours, all of us, to obey this word, laying aside these sins which so easily beset us, forgetting self in devotion to our cause, and rising above all personal and local aims in the one purpose to love and serve our Church "in the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace."

CHAPTER XVIII.

GIVING.

Our early training and traditions were all against religious Giving. Rebounding from the beliefs of the Church, as there has been occasion several times to repeat, we rebounded from and antagonized its methods also ; and among these methods, none, perhaps, were more stiffly opposed than the system of Church Beneficence. It was denounced as priestcraft, and as part of a system designed to subject the country to sectarian domination, and to exercise a baleful influence on our civil and religious liberty. Patriotism as well as anti-orthodoxy was appealed to, to discourage and frown upon it. These appeals, unfortunately, were vigorously seconded by the natural selfishness of the human heart, and a cordial welcome was thus insured for the teaching which accompanied them. So we grew up, with our education and our selfishness alike concurring to render us averse to systematic contributions for religious ends. Occasional efforts in this direction appear to have been made, notwithstanding the general current of denominational sentiment in this particular ; and there are even indications that there was a time in our early history when our parishes were expected to make annual contributions to our Convention — though precisely for what purpose is not clear. These attempts, however, were feeble and spasmodic, and seem not to have been of much avail. As the result, amidst the constant warfare against ' sectarian begging,' and anathemas as constant against all ' priestly devices ' for drawing money from the people's pockets, we naturally became a people bristling with hostile prejudices against any and all efforts to raise money for religious purposes, outside ordinary parish expenses, and a rare contribution in response to some special appeal.

Under these circumstances, when the necessities of our

work and the demand for something like enterprise and educational provisions on our part began to press, we had the whole previous education of years to unlearn, and the prejudices so carefully fostered to conquer and outgrow. As might have been expected, our first schools begged and starved — as was painfully exemplified in the early history of Clinton, not to speak of others of the same class, and in the struggles by which our Theological School at Canton for a long time just kept its head above water; and till very recently our Missionary efforts, after longer or shorter attempts to live, invariably came to an untimely end, with this verdict to be rendered above their remains: Died of the lack of money, because of the indisposition of the people to give. Whatever the call sent out for purposes of Church-extension, it was sure to be treated with neglect by most of our ministers and parishes, while it received but scanty response from those who responded at all; and when it was seriously proposed to go before the denomination for *One Hundred Thousand Dollars*, to establish Tufts College, who that was then in the field will ever forget how wild the project was thought by many to be, or how hands were lifted, and eyebrows raised, among our parishes all over the land, at the utter hardihood of such an undertaking?

We have been bravely learning since then, and an immense advance has been made in the generous disposition and habits of our people. Schools and colleges have been endowed; the Murray Fund — so much of it as we have — has been raised; the honorable record of our Centenary Year has been made; church-debts have been paid, and splendid church-edifices have been reared; and various gifts, scattered along our path, have told of open hands and liberal hearts. But we have as yet simply begun to learn and to do in this respect — as in most others. We have only to look at our Murray Fund, still incomplete, — and to reckon up the unfilled quotas of the Special Fund, called for to liquidate the debt incurred mainly by the mistaken policy of pouring all our Centenary receipts into the Murray Fund, leaving the expenses to be afterwards provided for, — and to consider the meagre revenue from the Missionary Boxes for the year past, and especially have only to read

over the returns of the last collection under the rules of our Convention, and to see how comparatively small is the number of parishes (*one hundred and sixty-four* out of a reported aggregate of *nine hundred and sixty-nine*) which have taken the collection, and how comparatively small are most of the amounts given by those which have taken it, to perceive that we have a great deal more to learn, and a vast advance yet further to make, ere we shall fulfil our obligations by contributing the resources which our opportunities and our work require.

Here, then, is a call for a New Departure which we cannot slight, if we are a Church of Christ, in this world to stay. God be thanked for all we have wrought and given! Let there be no scolding or fault-finding towards anybody — only hearty commendation and encouragement for those who, in any measure, have done their duty. But we must recognize the facts as they are, and learn the lesson of an increased generosity. There must be more freedom, and largeness, and universality of giving, or the wheels of our activities cannot go on. Not some, but all of our ministers must be in sympathy with what as a Church we are trying to do, and enjoin on their hearers the duty of participating as they are able in these gifts to God and the Church — enforcing their words by themselves giving as they can; not a part, but all of our parishes must enroll themselves among those faithful in whatever collections or contributions the rules of our Convention or the exigencies of our work require; and more and more we must all feel the imperativeness alike of the demand and of the obligation that we 'lay by us in store, as God has prospered us,' for the furtherance of our truth, and having remembered it according to this ratio while living, those blessed with means must fail not to bequeath something of the bounty God has bestowed, to help it forward, when they die.

Dollars are 'the sinews of war,' as we witnessed to our cost, when it became necessary to roll up a debt of such frightful proportions in our contest with treason, for the salvation of our republic. They are equally the sinews of all organized effort. Little can be done in this world, in any field, without them. Commerce needs them. But so, not

less, do labor, and law, and art, and philanthropy, and religion; and Universalism cannot be organized and pushed, nor our Church make itself felt to widest purpose, save as Universalists catch the impulse of generosity, and learn the grace of Giving. The sooner we all awake, in the pulpit and out of it, to a thorough comprehension of this fact, the better. "Give," said our Lord, "and it shall be given unto you." A great principle underlies these words. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." This is the Providential law — as true of churches or communities as of individuals; and no church or denomination ever has prospered, or ever can prosper, except on the condition thus ordained. Christ gave himself, and those who took up his work gave their money, — those of them who had it, — themselves, their all, for his sake: how else could the first Christian Church have been planted, or could Christianity itself have become a power in the world? And all through Christian history, the Church that has opened its hands and given the most, other things being equal, has been the Church which has taken widest hold of the popular heart, and gathered most souls about its altars.

This is still the law; and under it *our* future is to be determined. If, therefore, we have really any desire to be a great Church, helping to save the world, here is one of the inexorable conditions on which alone we can become so: We must give, and giving henceforth must be the rule and not the exception among us. Think of the munificent donations and bequests of which we are constantly hearing, bestowed for educational and church-uses by members of sister denominations — and then of the innumerable little streams besides that are constantly flowing into their treasuries! Making the most of them, how diminutive is our record, and how paltry our gifts in comparison! It is time for us more profoundly to feel the rebuke, and to respond to the summons, that comes to us in such a comparison. We claim to have the faith most precious in itself, and that souls and the world most need. How, then, according to our means, can we be satisfied with

being less generous in our service of it than are others in their service of narrower and meaner faiths? What is the spectacle we present, and the conclusion we invite, if we are so? It is very well for us to talk about the glory and excellence of Universalism, and its worth to souls, and the world's need of it: for all this is true. But how much are we sacrificing, how much are we giving, how much are we doing for it? This is the question that goes down underneath all talk, and tells the real story of our love for Universalism and our sense of its importance. And however beautiful or however true it may be, all talk about Universalism, or anybody's need of it, is mockery, is almost blasphemy, on the lips of any man or woman who is not giving for it as he or she is able. Having the best faith, Universalists ought to show themselves appreciative of it, quickened and enlarged by it; and this is what we must show, learning the lesson of Church Beneficence as others learned it long ago, or our opportunities will be wasted, and the work we are wanted to do will be transferred to those willing to pay for the privilege of doing it. To a noble mind, money is of no value in itself. Its value is solely in its uses. And no man is a Universalist really who, having money, does not regard it as God's bounty, put into his hands as a means of doing good, and therefore give according to his ability, glad to account himself God's almoner for the spread of His truth in the extension of our Church. What we want in this respect, and must have, if we are to be a living and growing Church, is a proper spirit of simple stewardship, mindful always of Paul's axiom, "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."

There are those who think we have had enough of this talk about money. When, they impatiently ask, are our parishes and people to have relief from these incessant appeals, that, like the daughters of Solomon's horse-leech, are forever crying, Give, give? Let such understand that, till the Church-militant becomes the Church-triumphant, and the world is redeemed, the only possible answer to their inquiry is, *Never*. As long as money is needed for anything in this world, it will be needed for the cause of Christ; and as long as the Universalist Church lives and tries to grow, —

and it will die, and deserve to die, whenever it ceases to try to grow, — the cry will be, *Money, money,* for the work of the Lord. There is no discharge from this war. And the more we give, reaping results from what we give, the more we shall have to give — because our field will broaden, our opportunities multiply, our work increase, as the calls to which we shall have to attend will become more numerous and more importunate. Only by getting out of our Church, and out of all churches, and out of the world, can these questioners get relief from the appeal to give.

Nor will these calls for money, as our Church will urge them, ever exceed our ability to answer them. There was a time when we were a poor people, and when great undertakings were impossible to us because we lacked the means to carry them forward. That time has happily ceased. With comparatively few *very* rich, we have few *very* poor. We are mainly constituted of the great middle class — among whom wealth is seldom concentrated in large fortunes, but who have a great deal of diffused wealth. Of this we have our share, making us rich, — not as rich as some other churches, but rich nevertheless, with an aggregate wealth that would surprise us should we see it stated in the actual figures. We have the means, therefore, to do whatever we may desire, or the demands of our cause make necessary; and however large our plans, not one of them will need fail if we can but have all our pocketbooks baptized and consecrated as they should be. There are too many, unfortunately, who fail to consider this, and who are still gauging our ability by the old standard of our former poverty instead of the new standard of our present affluence. All such gauging should cease. Making all due allowance for parishes that are weak, and struggling, and poor, God and the world have a right to expect that we shall devise and give according to our real possessions; and we shall stand condemned and shamed if we fail to do so.

We are, indeed, to guard against impatience and disappointment, and others, watching us, should guard against doing us injustice, if the lesson of Giving is not learned among us as rapidly as it might be. It is slow learning

hard lessons, even when there is nothing to be unlearned. How much slower it must be when there is so much to unlearn as in our case in respect to this subject! Most unreasonable, manifestly, it would be to expect that a people not simply so untrained in systematic giving for church purposes, but drilled quite to the contrary, should at once rise out of the indisposition and irresponsiveness in which they have been educated, into the most generous comprehension of duty, and pour out their gifts with the freedom and readiness of those who, through half a dozen generations, have been trained to this very thing. Time is required, in this as in everything else. Giving is a habit to be acquired, a grace to be cultivated, an attainment to be grown into.

But while all this is to be duly taken into account, to prevent impatience and unreasonable expectations of immediate results, our obligations are none the less clear or imperative, and each year ought to show something gained, and as the consequence, a larger number of collections, and more bequests, and an increase of individual gifts, both as to number and amounts, and so a more gratifying sum-total of contributions for the endowment and extension of our Church. How can we look for the confidence or respect of other churches, or of the world, if it is not so? This is a very real thing with us; and more and more we should outgrow our indifference and irresponsiveness, our narrow and selfish ideas, and broaden into a beneficence as large-eyed and thoughtful and broad-handed as the Gospel whose name we bear. How we *should* give, if we should give in proportion to the breadth and generosity of this! Especially should we make haste to outgrow and put away from us the fancy which so asserts itself in the minds of not a few of our ministers and people, that whatever is bestowed for work away from home is so much taken from the resources of home-interests, necessarily lessening to this extent the minister's means of living and the ability of the parish to provide for its own support. Perhaps there is no impression more mischievous than this, in hindering the general response we ought to have to the calls of our Convention and our cause. But it is totally unfounded, besides being very

narrow and selfish. No impression was ever more thoroughly disproved by all experience. As, invariably, the men and women who are giving most frequently are they who give most willingly, so, as universally, the parishes which most cordially and liberally put themselves into accord with general church-plans and give for church-work, are the very parishes which are found most freely and punctually meeting all home demands. This is in the nature of things. Giving being, as has been said, a habit, to be acquired, it, like all other habits, grows upon us as it is practised. That genial brother and faithful minister, Otis A. Skinner — the story of whose good life and tragic death ought some time to be fitly told — was accustomed during his first canvass for Tufts College to illustrate this by reminding the people, in his pleasant way, that if one wishes his cow to be a good, free milker, he must see that she is milked regularly, every day. If she is not, she 'dries up.' And though the illustration is a little homely, and perhaps invites a repartee as to the priestly milking of the flock, it is nevertheless apt and suggestive. The way to get people to giving most readily is to *accustom* them to giving — guarding of course against unreasonable and excessive calls. The clasps of purses become rusty and hard to open in proportion as they are unused; and the people whose hands it is most difficult to move into their pockets are those who never give — not, usually, because they are stingy, but because they have not formed the habit of giving. For this reason, the surest plan for making a parish prompt and liberal at home, is to enlist its sympathies and open the springs of its generosity with reference to the work of the church abroad. *This* is the rod of Moses which brings water even from the rock.

There are two things, particularly, which we want in respect to this subject:

1. We want among our people a sense of the fact that their religion is one of the objects which have a paramount right to their money. The idea now is, too generally, that religion and the church are among the last and the least of these objects; that, in fact, it is doubtful whether they have any real claim upon what we pay for them; and that,

if they have, it is rather by way of gratuity — because of our generosity, and not by way of right — because of any valid consideration which they can plead. It is time that all such conceptions of the subject were exploded. Let any man consider what Christianity has put into the world, and ask, whatever his character or possessions, what he would have, or be, were Christianity and all it has done for him and given to him taken out of his life, and out of the circumstances amidst which his lot is cast, — or let him consider, so far as he has any actual faith in Christ, and especially in our gospel of Universalism, what amount of money would purchase it, and he will soon see something of his debt to Christ, and something of what is the claim of his religion and his church to be counted first among the things to which his money belongs. Next to his home and his family, there is nothing for which any man is under such obligation to pay as he is to pay for his religion and his church ; and neither among us nor others will this matter of Religious Giving command the action to which it is entitled until we all settle down into the recognition of our church-calls as among the primary and legitimate calls which must be met just as much as a business note, or the education of our children. Then,

2. We want a regular system of Giving. I shall not here attempt to outline any such system. Each person and family can best determine this for themselves. Some men assign a fixed portion of their income for charitable and religious purposes — like the merchant who, having read Jacob's vow, " Of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto Thee," opened a formal account with O. P. J. — the Old Patriarch Jacob, sacredly setting so much of all his gains apart to be given away. Others prefer to reach the same end in a less formal way. The way, however, is of small concern ; the end is the important thing ; and if, after any fashion, our people could be induced to incorporate Giving among the items of their annual expenditure, and then to systematize their Giving, so as to insure its due proportion of income for it, and its wise distribution among the several objects which are entitled to remembrance, it can easily be seen how much would be

gained for all the interests of our cause, and all the departments of our Church-work. It is not to be doubted that there are those among us who do this. Make the practice general, — above all, make it universal, and how much would be saved in the fret and friction of begging that would be avoided! How abundantly all the streams of our activities would be fed! With what smoothness every wheel and pinion of our methods would run! And how our Church, able to respond to every call, — sowing, build, ing, gathering, growing, to the glory of God, would become a power as now it cannot be!

Let us hope that the time will come when Giving will be thus systematized by all our people. But in the mean time, our needs press. Demands upon us increase. Opportunities offer. Pleadings for help, especially from innumerable points of the great West and North-West, and from the Pacific shore, come to us. How are these to be met? How but by such an awakening to the subject as not even our Centenary Year witnessed? Every minister and every believer should feel called of God and the Master to think and act in this regard as never before, that every source of revenue we have may be made productive to the largest degree possible. Every child should be educated to remember Christ and the Church, and to grow up a generous contributor in their behalf. Our MURRAY FUND must be completed — and increased, for, as the Board of Trustees well said in their last Report, "amidst the precarious and variable resources with which we carry on our work, the only certain and reliable basis of operations is the Murray Fund, and the efficiency of the Convention, especially in church-extension, must always be in proportion to its assured income from" this source. Our *Missionary Boxes* must be remembered, and every home must do its part towards making them a success. Having originated them, will it not be a shame to us if, while other churches, appropriating them from us, roll up an income of from *twenty to fifty thousand dollars* a year from them, we so neglect as to realize little or nothing from them? The *Annual Collection* required by the rules of our Convention must receive the attention and yield the returns from all our parishes which alike the necessities

of the case and allegiance to the Convention demand. Is it creditable to us that with a roll of *nine hundred and sixty-nine* parishes, only *one hundred and sixty-five* last year gave this collection? *

But why enumerate? The sole dependence of our Church is on the free-will offerings of its members. We have no despotism to ordain levies, no machinery to compel unwilling contributions. Our strength is in the loyalty, faith, earnestness and generosity of our people. If these fail, our Church fails, and as one of the organized forces of Christendom, we shall die and leave our errand unfulfilled. Are we to do so? *No!* my confidence in the Universalists of America bids me answer in their behalf, and, *No!* is the echo I hear from thousands of believing souls. Let us have the New Departure we need in this particular, then, — and that straightway, insuring the prompter, larger, more general giving we so much need. There is use for large amounts; and if the Convention had a *hundred thousand dollars* this very year, the whole could be wisely employed — and so employed as to gladden our hearts in the results that would follow. But the thing of most immediate importance is that all our parishes, all our ministers and people shall understand the legitimacy of these claims upon them, and *put themselves into line by giving something.* A recognition of our Church methods and calls, attesting thoughtfulness

* I have referred above only to the sources on which our Church is immediately dependent for the means of doing its yearly work. But I should seriously fail in duty did I not also call attention to our *Ministerial Relief Funds* as objects of generous remembrance, that should every year grow, to make provision for those who, having unselfishly worn themselves out in the service of the Church, have no other human reliance to save them, or their families, from an old age of destitution. Never was money more worthily given than when Cornelius Harsen gave his thousands to found the *Harsen Fund* in New York; and John G. Gunn did but imitate an honorable example when he devised his *Eight Thousand Dollars* to the General Convention, for "the relief, support and maintenance of needy clergymen, their widows and families, in the hope that others may be led to contribute to the same object." Let these *Funds* be remembered in the wills of dying Universalists; and let similar Funds be founded by all our State Conventions, to plead as they must for the remembrance which their design will so well deserve.

and sympathy with respect to them — *this* is the thing that presses now. Amounts are secondary to this. This secured, amounts will grow, and each year will render more generous returns. This, therefore, we must have.

So only can we show ourselves as a Church thoroughly appreciative of the demands that crowd upon us, or duly put ourselves into accord with that pervading Law on which the harmony and very life of the universe depend. This is the Law of Benefaction. Everywhere we find it, and obedience to it. God is the great Giver, and out of His infinite fulness the streams of His beneficence inexhaustibly flow. What would become of us if it were not so? And in its place, what does not, like Him, somehow impart? Nothing exists for itself alone. Every grain of sand is linked in unconscious brotherhood with every other, helping to hold it in place. The drops of the ocean, the rays of the sun, the leaves of the forest, everything that breathes or is, all own the necessity by which they act and re-act on each other. The ordinance of Giving thus stretches from mote to mote, from world to world, from constellation to constellation, weaving its wondrous net-work of kindly forces and binding all things in indissoluble unity to each other and to the throne of God. Nothing is too minute, nothing too vast to contribute its portion to the general good.

Behold, then, the anomaly that Selfishness is, and how everywhere God is rebuking and admonishing against it. It is shamed and outlawed by every atom and every world, by every manly impulse and every womanly sympathy, and crowning all the rest, by the great Love that never grows weary in bestowing, and by that life of unapproached sacrifice in which Christ gave himself for our sake. Where shall the selfish man, or the selfish parish find companionship or approval? Everything else owns God's ordinance, and gives as it can. But, living only as a pensioner on others' aid, — receiving, constantly, from innumerable sources, and fed, sheltered, blessed in a thousand ways, this man, this parish, while everything else is giving as well as receiving, slinks into the contracting shell of a mean selfhood, with hands out only to clutch whatever further comes in the way,

growling, Each for himself; I do no more. Look at the man, look at the parish, standing so rebuked amidst the kindly fellowships of Nature, and in presence of God's bounty and Christ's cross, and let each take care that the rebuking angel does not point to us, saying, This is the parish, or thou art the man!

CHAPTER XIX.

DOING.

It was said in the chapter on Our Ministry, that if, as a Church, we have any right to *be*, it is certain there is something for us to *do*. And when we consider the circumstances amidst which we find ourselves, how much there is for us to do! Error, unbelief, indifference, poverty, sin, how numerous are the calls they make upon us, and how various the paths of activity they open, and the forms of effort to which they invite! Our own culture in right character is our first duty, individually, as our fidelity to Christ and the Church is the first thing for us to think of, collectively, in this matter of Doing; and what is the ideal of character towards which we should aim, what are some of the means we should employ, and with what ardor of consecration we should give ourselves to that high personal Christian living, and that depth and earnestness of church-life, which is alone in keeping with the demands of our Universalist faith, most of the preceding chapters have tried somehow to show. But any Doing that thinks only of ourselves, or our own interests, or even of our own moral and spiritual improvement, is not only unpardonably exclusive and selfish, but fails to fulfil one of the essential conditions on which alone our highest interests and best improvement are to be served.

No life is complete lived in and for itself alone. We are whole only as parts of each other. The old saints, dwelling in caves and deserts, macerating their bodies, and thinking solely of their own victory over the flesh and the devil, were no saints at all — only so many pieces of utter religious selfishness. The finest character is impossible in solitude. One must live in society, throbbing with human sympathies, participating in human concerns, responding to human needs, to be largest, — human in the roundest and noblest sense.

Christ thought of himself, and of his own victory over temptation, and of his own loyalty to God, and gave much time, and struggle, and prayer to keep himself, while in, above the world; but had this been all that he thought of, however blameless he might have been in his purity and self-control, there could have been no Christ. In the very nature of his appointment, the Christ is a servant, — that is, a doer: as he himself said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister;" — "my meat is to *do* the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." In no single expression, perhaps, is so much summed up of all that most charms us in his life, as in the brief words, He "went about *doing* good;" and should we strike out all that his love of the sinful, his kindness to the poor, his innumerable tender ministries to human want and sorrow, — in one word, his DOING, contributed to make him, how much would remain of all that the name of CHRIST now symbolizes? Even God is most glorious because of what He is in the immeasurable empire of being as the One Ministering Spirit, *doing* good forever; and were it possible for us to conceive of Him as dwelling solitary in His Eternity, living solely in and for Himself, most of what now moves us to love and adoration would be gone.

These things being so, need it be said what is required before any man or woman can be a disciple of Christ, or (practically) a child of God, — before any Church can be a Church of Christ and a company of God's servants? Doing is not only the active side of Being; it is the indispensable condition of our best development, and the only method in which we can really glorify God, attest our love for Christ, or pay the world for the privilege of living in it. Accordingly, not, What wilt thou have me *believe?* nor even, How wilt thou have me *feel?* but, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to DO?" was the first outcry of the awakened and penitent Saul, as it is the first thought that comes to every truly awakened soul; and Christ's word to all who bear his name, whether individuals or churches, is, "Ye are my friends if ye DO whatsoever I command you," and, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that DOETH the will of my Father

which is in heaven." Nor is it to be forgotten that the final test of acceptance or condemnation, in the parable which sets forth the principle on which our Lord, having 'come' to 'sit upon the throne of his glory,' is administering his kingdom, is, not faith, nor feeling, nor any punctiliousness in mere personal or church duties, but this same test of DOING: the words being, to those on the right hand, "Inasmuch as ye *have done* it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye *have done* it unto me;" and to those on the left, "Inasmuch as ye *did it not* to one of the least of these, ye *did it not* to me." From whatever point of view regarded, then, this subject of DOING is one that has weighty demands on our attention, alike as individuals and as a Church.

What we are to *do* as individuals, in addition to what is required for our personal growth in holy character, there is here no space to say in detail. It is all included in the general statement, that life is to be accepted as a time to live and to labor for others as well as for ourselves, and that we are actively to enlist in every effort for the relief, improvement, and welfare of our fellow-men, to the full extent of our ability and opportunity. We are to enclose ourselves within no selfish 'metes and bounds;' are to be no drones in the great hive of the world's interests and activities; neither shirks nor cowards in the unceasing battle of life. We are, each one of us, in the world to do what we can to make it better and happier. *Service* is alike the law of humanity and the law of Christ; and it is for each man and woman to ask, as in the presence of that eye from which nothing is concealed, What am *I* DOING as a unit in the great sum of our race, and especially as a soldier in the army of Christ, to promote truth, to relieve distress, to instruct ignorance, to win back the wayward, to pull down wrong, to build up right? — and to feel condemned if the answer must be, Nothing; only meanly living for myself. We are grossly recreant to every obligation, if we do not, as we may, seek to render some service that shall count towards one or all of these ends outside ourselves. Here, as everywhere, even 'the widow's mite' finds acceptance, and does its part. "I see in this world," said Bishop Newton, "two heaps — one

of human happiness and one of misery: now, if I can take but the smallest bit from the second heap, and add to the first, I carry a point. I should be glad to do *great* things; but I will not neglect little ones."

And this same spirit is to possess and impel us as a Church. Herein is the New Departure to which in this particular we are called. We have not been altogether idle. For a hundred years, we have been doing — not always what we might have done, but often bravely, manfully, — sometimes, heroically. Not without much cost of labor and sacrifice have we as a Church come to be what we are. But, like all new religious movements — the usual necessity being in our case intensified because of our peculiar position and circumstances, our effort hitherto has mainly been a 'struggle for life.' Socially and theologically, everything has been against us. Not an inch of ground has been gained that has not been fought for. We have had our parishes to found, our church-edifices to erect, our ministry to support; and these things being done, we have thought we had little time or means for anything else. Then, latterly, as we have grown stronger, the expansive instinct has asserted itself, and we have built schools and colleges, and set on foot a work of Church-extension — the logical moral sequence of our growth thus far, and a necessity, if we had any earnestness or honesty of conviction, that we might grow still further. Even in respect to these things, however, we have never yet been half enough in earnest, for the reason that we never yet, as a Church, have caught the full inspiration of our faith as an impulse to endeavor, nor begun to realize what a stress of indebtedness comes from the possession of such a Gospel, requiring us to be up and doing to give it to others. Greatly more in earnest there is need for us to be, therefore, in our Doing even within the line of these special Church interests and obligations.

But this is barely the beginning of our Doing, if we are to prove ourselves a Church of Christ. To think only, as a Church, of the extension of our particular doctrines, and the enlargement and strengthening of our special sect, is as unpardonably mean and selfish as it is for us, personally, to

think only of our own improvement, or our own gains. *We exist to touch the world's error and evil at all possible sides, and to make ourselves felt in behalf of every interest of humanity, as positive workers for the advancement of the kingdom of God.* Our obligations admit of no private, or local, or sectarian interpretation. We are in the world, a representative of Christ, to war and to help in behalf of truth and righteousness, in all directions and in every field, as he would were he personally here. His life gives us the key to our duty, as his spirit supplies our constant inspiration.

Giving the 'Address to the People,' at the Dedication of the Church of the Paternity (Dr. Chapin's), in New York, in 1866, after speaking of their *personal* and *denominational* duties, I said, —

But you have, also, a membership in the great brotherhood of Christendom and the wider brotherhood of Humanity, and therefore have your *general Christian* responsibilities. See that you are no less true to these. You have named yourselves *the Church of the Divine Paternity.* Beautiful name, reminding us always of that sublime Fatherhood of God which, including all souls as its children, watches over their welfare and works steadily for their redemption. Fail not to catch the spirit thus indicated, and to labor, as you have opportunity, for the ends it seeks. Show that your religion is thoroughly practical; that your love for God incarnates itself in love and work for man, and that every effort for the succor of the distressed, for the help of the poor, for the conversion of the sinful, by whomsoever made, is here sure of response and co-operation. Christianity means help, healing, salvation for the poor and the perishing; and every Christian church should be, as far as possible, a never-failing fountain of help and healing. See that this Church becomes such a fountain. There is nothing that grieves me more, as I consider the position of our churches in this city and elsewhere, than the fact that we are so occupied with our own endeavors to live, that we fail of any active and independent participation in the various ministries of social help and amelioration, in which so many other churches are engaged, and for which there are such imperative calls. Where are our schools for the poor

and the friendless? * Where are our missions to the degraded and the destitute? Where our 'Homes' or Hospitals? Where our associations for generous outlook and kindly care of any sort? Except as our 'Sewing Societies' may answer some charitable purpose, and as we contribute to sustain the philanthropic activities of others, we are in no way making ourselves felt among the practical Christian forces of our city, or of the country. The explanation, as I have suggested, is found in our circumstances. But in your case, this explanation no longer holds. With your resources, and your actual and possible strength, ought you not, as a church, to be doing some of this practical Christian work? Our faith is the soul of all generous and philanthropic effort. Take the lead in the liberality and earnestness with which all our churches will by and by address themselves to this kind of effort, and make for yourselves a name, by making yourselves a power, among the beneficent agencies that, in Christ's name, are seeking to carry physical relief and the means of spiritual instruction and elevation to those who are now destitute and astray, or who are sitting in the shadow of intellectual darkness and moral death.

I make no apology for introducing here this extract from an Address to a particular church, for the sufficient reason that I could in no way better express what I believe is the call of God to all our churches, or more clearly indicate the New Departure with which this chapter is chiefly concerned. The time has come when, as a Church, we are summoned to broader aims and outlooks. We should no longer leave this whole field of philanthropic Christian toil to Christians of other names, nor be content with what individuals among us are doing. We have the faith which alone furnishes either the legitimate basis, or the best inspiration for this kind of labor. We have the means too — in men and women and money. It is for us to be true to our faith, by using these means in DOING accordingly. The Church of the

* Reference was made, in giving the Address, to a small, struggling Mission at Sixty-first Street, which had existed for several years, and which has now grown to hundreds, and made itself very useful. Possibly a few similar schools may have since been founded by our friends in other communities. If so, where?

Divine Paternity has well led in founding its *Chapin Home for the Aged and Infirm*. In due time, it will doubtless follow with other enterprises in the same broad field. The example should not be lost. Our whole Church, surveying the field — alas! so sending to us its calls for succor and deliverance, should be profoundly agitated with the inquiry, What can we do? and our individual churches should turn their attention to what is thus demanded, that, as they have the means, they may use them, and everywhere give evidence, *as churches*, that they have the mind which was in him who came "to preach the Gospel to the poor; to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised." There is nothing like Christian work to vindicate the right of an individual or a church to the Christian name. "That little Mrs. —— is a noble woman," said a zealous Presbyterian, greatly prejudiced against Universalism, referring to a Universalist lady much interested in philanthropic work. False, and even mischievous, as he thought Universalism to be, he could not deny its worthiness as represented in such a doer; and if, either personally or as a Church, we desire the Christian recognition to which we are entitled, this shows how we are to command it. We shall lack — and shall deserve to lack — the hearty respect of other churches, and the fullest confidence and hearing of the world, so long as we fail duly to put our faith into the philanthropic Doing by which only, as a part of our work, can it be fitly expressed. Meaning what Christ does, every church that assumes to bear his name should try to mean the same — and we above all others.

Nor is this all. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," was, in his final parting with them, Christ's solemn charge to those whom he had trained to be his messengers. It is no less his charge to every church to-day, and to us as much as to any others. Just now, we are occupied in the work of consolidation and Church-extension at home; but the time is near at hand, if it be not already here, when, in a New Departure, we must enlist also in effort to extend a knowledge of our truth abroad. Even now, as these lines are penned, an apostle

from across the water is pleading among us for help to build a house of worship for his people in Scotland. Should his appeal be responded to, this, including what has before been done for him, will be our *second* step towards foreign missionary work, as, so far as I know, the mission of Rev. A. C. Thomas to England and Scotland, some years ago, was our *first*.

History is prophecy. In the future as in the past, Christianity can conquer new provinces from the domains of idolatry and spiritual death only as Christendom sends out its missionaries, the heralds of the cross and the pioneers of its civilization. Every desert has its spots of verdure, which, if multiplied and extended by the sending out of seed and soil, would in time conquer the dearth and barrenness, and transform the desolation into one broad stretch of fields and gardens. So the world's evangelization has proceeded. So it must proceed. Working from every christianized point, Christendom must plant its missionary stations, to serve as centres of Christian influence; and as these moral oases multiply, and gradually widen and extend, the desert of heathendom will be possessed, and, becoming transformed into a field of Christian culture, will bear fruit to the glory of God. The foreign missionary work is as much a part of the work of the Church of Christ as its work at home. There were foreign missionaries as well as home missionaries among the Apostles; and from that hour to this, there never have been lacking those who have trod a similar path, enriching it with their example of fidelity, — often sanctifying it with their blood. Next to Christ himself, there is nothing that Christianity could so little afford to lose as the record of what its self-sacrificing and heroic missionaries have done, make what abatements we may for mistaken motives, and even for (occasional) mercenary aims. Nor are foreign missionaries any less than home missionaries needed now. How little of the world is yet conquered to Christ! And, with such an interpretation of the Gospel as we could bear abroad for the enlightenment of the nations, are we to have no part in extending his conquests? Shame on us if we could think of such indolence and recreancy! We are called to this field of Christian Doing no less than others,

— nay, as soon as we are in a condition to respond, are called all the more imperatively than others by so much as we have a better Gospel to impart. How much significance for us there is in the words of the Japanese student, protesting against the attempt to convert his people to 'orthodoxy'! "The Christianity which will bless Japan," he says, "is that of *love*, not that of *hell fire*. Perhaps you may use hell fire; but I am sure it will not work very well in Japan, for hell fire has been preached by Buddhist priests for more than a thousand years." What a call comes to us from such a statement, and from corresponding conditions elsewhere, summoning us to enter this field of missionary labor! How much light and relief our message would carry, especially to those at all cultivated in their perceptions, and accustomed, though dimly and superstitiously, to deal with the religious problems of being! And are we always to slight such calls? Impossible. It is as certain that the time is coming when Universalists will send out their missionaries, to bear the story of a merciful Father, and an omnipotent cross, and a world's redemption, to souls now sitting in darkness and famishing in their idolatries and superstitions, as it is that Universalism is the living Gospel of Christ, or that the Universalist Church has any business in the world. God hasten the time.

And, impressed with all that this subject of Doing, in Christ's name and for the widening sway of his kingdom, means and includes, will we not all give ourselves to the New Departure it demands — so that, laboring with fresh zeal for our own spiritual culture, for the growth of our parishes, and for the enlargement of our Church, we may also work as never before for the relief, enlightenment and welfare of souls about us, and be ready to give and TO DO for the extension of our truth, for the succor of the distressed, for the rescue of the perishing, for the conversion of the darkened and sinful, wherever our message can be borne?

CHAPTER XX.

THREE WORDS.

Herewith ends this plea for Our New Departure. Its original design included several other topics. Especially was it desired to have a chapter each on Our Relations to Other Churches, on Unbelief, and on Some Serious Questions touching the fact that, through social influences and other causes, so many of our youth have been, and are being, lost to us. But the topics could not be at all properly treated without swelling these pages beyond the limits assigned them. The field we have traversed, however, is a broad one — perhaps, for the present, sufficiently broad. Who, indeed, that has gone over it through these successive chapters, looking back upon it, can doubt that the New Departure herein suggested, could it take place at the several points indicated, all along the line of our thought, our work and our Church life, would give us, not only a spiritual awakening and impulse, but a commanding hold upon popular attention and sympathy, and a consequent practical efficiency, that would speedily make our Church the livest and mightiest agency for Christ, and for the arrest and conversion of souls, at present asserting itself in the world?

And now, reviewing these pages, and considering how this labor can be most fittingly closed, three words occur to me as best summing up what further needs to be said: Candor; Loyalty; Ignition.

I. The first of these words — Candor — indicates the mental attitude and state of feeling towards us, which we have a right henceforth to demand and expect on the part of those who regard Universalism as false, — the New Departure to which they are called in respect to us. We make no complaint that our neighbors and friends disbelieve and oppose

Universalism, if, after duly informing themselves what it is and what are its alleged proofs, they think they see good reason to do so. On the contrary, if they have honestly and intelligently reached this conclusion, we aver it to be not only their right, but their duty, to disbelieve and oppose it — precisely as it is our right and duty to reject and oppose 'orthodoxy,' holding the convictions we do. But it is no person's duty or right to misrepresent Universalism; to oppose it, ignorant of what it is, and obstinately persisting that he will not be informed; or to vilify and scandalize its believers, denying them the Christian name. Whatever their faults, the preceding pages may properly claim, in some degree, to express alike the faith, the aspirations and the purposes dominant in the Universalist Church to-day. Are they the faith, the aspirations or the purposes of infidels, or of a profane, bad people?

Reviewing our history, we see many things we could wish otherwise, though, all the circumstances being taken into account, we do not see how, under any law of intellectual or spiritual evolution with which we are acquainted, they could have been materially different; and, considering our present condition, we confess a lack of many things which it would be well for us to possess. What Church does not? But we are not infidels. We are not a people devoid of spiritual insight or concern, blindly and godlessly travelling towards the realities of the unseen world, unconscious of the solemnity of this life, or of that which is to come, and trying to deceive others into a like blindness and godlessness. We believe that, here or anywhere, life is God's gift, and that He is continuously and mercifully over it all; but we are profoundly impressed with its solemn meaning everywhere. We feel how much is, every moment, at stake in it. We see how solicitously God is seeking to make us aware of Him and of our obligations to Him, and to induce us, in a return of His love, to devote life to His service. We believe in our need of a Saviour, and in the Saviour God has sent. We believe there is no possible way of attaining harmony with God, or with the laws of our own being, anywhere, except through the help of this Saviour, in the awakening, penitence and spiritual birth of which the

New Testament is so full. We believe it to be guilt no less than folly to live for time and earth, as if they were all, and the soul nothing. We believe in the penalties of irreligion and sin, and, as none others do, affirm that there is no escape from these penalties. And we are Universalists only because, in a study of God's Word and of the design of Christ's mission and the spirit of his character, we cannot be otherwise, and because we are sure that the Gospel as we interpret it has far greater power than any other conception of Christianity to impress, arouse and convert, and thus to stir souls and consecrate them to God. Satisfy us that Universalism is not taught in the Bible and the life of Christ, or that anything else can do more to make God and Christ precious, and to further the salvation of men, and we shall at once renounce it, accepting what is better.

And, all this being true, — true beyond peradventure or denial, — true on the authority of every fact or exposition that has a right to be considered in the case, — proved to be true by the unbroken testimony of an entire century, — is it to pass for nothing, and are we to be perpetually tabooed under the odium of an unfounded prejudice, as if, instead of being such a people, we were a band of religious freebooters, having nothing in common with Christian society, only hanging on its skirts to ravage and destroy it? We protest against so great a wrong. We demand a new departure in this regard, and that every individual, every pulpit, every church, shall henceforth be held to be a wilful slanderer before God and man, that, overlooking what we *are*, dares to treat us as being what we are *not*. It is too late to plead ignorance of our position and character. We insist on being henceforth judged by them.

How constantly we have been otherwise judged, no one acquainted with the facts need be told. The Evangelical Alliance, lately in session, assumed to represent the whole Protestant Christian world, and so impertinently pushed us outside the Christian household — as one of the papers submitted to it, and, much to the shame of the body, received without rebuke, *wickedly* classed us among "the factors of American Infidelity." And this illustrates the common 'evangelical' policy towards us. Occasionally,

some catholic mind, while thinking us in error, has recognized us as none the less Christian, and searching to know exactly in what our error consists, has been disposed to meet us with honest reference to the principles really involved. But such instances have been so rare as to render the *rule* the more conspicuous, and — unfortunately for any general imitation of the example — have almost invariably resulted in the conversion of such antagonists into believers, as the persecuting Saul, meeting the Lord, became the consecrated Paul. The rule has been contemptuous neglect, or systematic misrepresentation. Large numbers have superciliously affected to regard Universalism as a vagary so wild, with adherents so vulgar or vicious, as to be beneath notice ; while those who have given it attention have done so only to misstate or caricature the doctrine, to travesty its arguments, to slander and abuse its believers. Any one of the numerous tracts, sermons or books against it will sufficiently attest this.

Our friends 'of the contrary part' seem, indeed, to have found it impossible to entertain the first conception of what candor with respect to us requires. Their usual answer to the question, "*Have you ever read a Universalist book?* is, "*No, and I do not wish to.*" Or, if, perchance, our books are appealed to, and apparent authorities are cited, it is, commonly, to show that they have been shamefully garbled — as some of these pages are almost certain to be, or that they have been read only to cull from them the most objectionable possible statements, and to parade exceptional theories, or incidental speculations, as if they were the very substance of Universalism itself. Robert Hall, the great English preacher, who scarcely had a second as a representative Baptist, like our own Walter Balfour, against the general sentiment of his denomination, denied the natural immortality of the soul. In like manner, in the entire freedom of opinion, on the one basis of the Bible, which has prevailed among us, and which, it is to be hoped, always will prevail, some even of our representative men have held opinions not generally accepted among us, while others in no sense representative have put forth their personal notions, or idiosyncrasies — some of them of the crudest sort. But

these opinions, or notions, have never been UNIVERSALISM. Every one of them might be exploded — as most of them have been — and Universalism would not be touched. A fortress is not carried because some of the sorties from it have been defeated, or some of the works appended to it — though built by the highest officers in command — have been stormed. As little importance have these personal or incidental opinions among Universalists, representative or otherwise, as related to our central position. And yet, these are the things — for the most part, the only things — which, whenever any seeming is made of quoting us, are put forth as showing what Universalism is! — things which are no more UNIVERSALISM than bubbles, or straws, on the surface of a stream are the stream itself.

Should I represent the Baptists as committed to the non-immortality of the soul, and quote Robert Hall as proof, I should be justly denounced not merely as uncandid, but as dishonest. The fact that a certain idea is held by one man, or by any number of men, no matter how eminent, in a denomination, it would be said, is no warrant for charging that idea upon the whole denomination, or for holding the general doctrinal system of the body responsible for it. On what fundamental basis does the denomination stand? What are its cardinal principles, — the ideas to which, *as a denomination*, it is committed? These are the questions, it would be agreed, which, controverting any denomination's position, candor is obliged to ask, and the answers to which must be the ground of objection and argument, if fair and Christian opposition is to be made.

And this, as our Church enters on the second century of its history, is the new departure which Universalism has a right to demand of its non-believers. Let those who think they must, reject or oppose it. But let them understand why, and deal with the real issue it tenders. There are theories and opinions which, limited for time as most of us are, we are justified in putting summarily aside. But Universalism is not one of these. True or false, it touches all that is most momentous in the interests of souls and of the universe. Not only everything most vital in theology, but everything most fundamental in morals is involved in it.

God's glory, Christ's honor, man's duty and destiny, all hinge upon it. If it is true, it is the grandest, most inclusive, most inspiring of all truths, shedding its light into the darkest recesses of human experience, and sounding its messages of hope through the deepest and awfulest caverns of depravity and spiritual death. If it is false, all things are shadowed in gloom; not even the most loving Christian is assured of a desirable destiny, and there is occasion for us all to wring our hands in a perpetual agony of suspense and pain. This being so, no one with a head or a heart can afford to be indifferent to it, or can be justified in ignoring it, or in dealing with it in any other than the most earnest, most reverent, most candid spirit. The best thought, the most intelligent appreciation, the most prayerful study can give it no more than it deserves.

Nor does the nature of the subject alone commend it to respect and investigation. The proportions which as a Christian conviction it has again attained urge the same demand. I say *again* attained, because, before the corruptions of Christianity began, Universalism, as we believe, was the accepted Christian faith, so that whoever denied or questioned it parted company so far not only with Christ and the Apostles, but with the whole Church. Not here to make a point of this, however, it is enough to say that Universalism is no longer the insignificant whimsey which, some years ago, it might have been held to be. Then its friends were few, its resources limited, its organization — if it could be called organization — chaotic, and all its means of influence small. But that time has passed. In spite of opposition, contumely and studied misrepresentation on the part of its enemies, and — what have been far worse for it — of numerous speculative errors and practical mistakes and short-comings on the part of its friends, it has now grown to a prevalence which entitles it to command consideration, and which no one aiming at any intelligent idea of the spiritual facts and tendencies of the time can afford to overlook. Not to speak of schools and colleges, or of the numbers, wealth, social position, learning, or moral worth, which the Universalist Church organically represents, Universalism has come, confessedly, to be a power among the elements of modern

Christian thought and life. Rev. Dr. Patton, of Chicago, not long ago, in a labored paper against it, was obliged to concede that Universalism is "a subject so close to human feelings" that "there need be no apology for discussing" it; that "it attracts increased attention daily in the theological world;" that "we can hardly conceive that a good man should be without sympathy with such longings and hopes" as it ministers to; that the doctrine was "entertained by John Frederic Oberlin and John Foster, after an examination of the subject in the light of reason and the Word of God;" that "not a few Christians lean decidedly towards" it, "while the contrary view is accepted by yet others only with painful doubt and a sense of conflict;" and that "learned orthodox commentators such as Neander, Tholuck, Olshausen, and Lange" are among those who favor it.*

And this being the testimony which its bitterest opponents are compelled to give concerning it, the time has evidently gone by for anybody to treat Universalism as if it were an obscure and contemptible heresy, with no friends to give it respectability, with no prestige to entitle it to attention. It is all about us, with everything best on its side; and while Dr. Patton is forced to admit that 'orthodoxy' is "accepted with painful doubt and a sense of conflict," and Dr. Edward Beecher testifies that it involves difficulties which are "felt by sanctified, humble and reasonable minds in proportion as they become holy, humble and reasonable," Universalism is penetrating all churches, and, *as a deep, underlying conviction, or hope,* is making friends and converts among their adherents and even their ministers, for the reason that, as Olshausen has said, "the feeling is deeply rooted in all noble minds, and is the expression of a desire for the perfected harmony of the universe," and because it is in so many ways proving, as distinguished authority once said it was destined to prove, "an exquisite adaptation to the spiritual wants of this distracted age."

If, then, our brethren of the traditional creeds will insist that Universalism is false, they should make due account of

* These extracts are quoted from a review of Dr. Patton, in the Universalist Quarterly, Vol. viii. p. 182, by Rev. G. T. Flanders, D. D.

the new conditions under which the warfare against it is to be waged, and modify their methods accordingly. Neither neglect, on the one hand, nor abuse and defamation, on the other, will further answer. A system for the satisfactions of which our whole nature, when at all awakened, is hungering, and on whose behalf so much is to be said by way of argument and proof, — which alone harmonizes reason, conscience and the analogies of nature with the Word of God, and whose principles are the only principles that any Christian can put into life, — which touches questions so vital and tremendous, and whose roots so stretch down into the heart of things, taking hold of all that concerns human welfare, and twining underneath the very throne of God, — which can alone solve the problems that most perplex us, irradiate the universe with the presence of an Infinite Love, or give peace to believing souls, — a system which, numbering the noblest and most learned of the fathers, with Origen at their head, among its early advocates, can point also to such men as Archbishop Tillotson, Sir Isaac Newton, Soame Jenyns, William Law, Bishop Newton, Dr. Priestley, Oberlin, Neander, John Foster, and Maurice among its later friends, — which inspires all our best poetry, and sums up the result which every fresh revelation of science suggests, and every deduction of philosophy prophesies, — which is 'orthodoxy' in Germany, and which is honeycombing the Church of England, as well as all branches of the American Church, — which, as we have seen, contains within itself such a fulness of truth and law, and motive and appeal, for the grandest spiritual results, — which to-day exhibits on the roll of its living defenders, or believers, so large a proportion of the world's best names, in all fields of study and intellectual achievement, and which, confessedly, has so much in the number, standing, culture and character of its organized adherents to deserve and compel respect — *such* a system, we submit, is no longer to be brushed aside as of no account, or misrepresented with impunity, or flippantly declared to be absurd or unscriptural; and as little is it to be disposed of by denouncing its believers as vulgar and ignorant nobodies, infidel in opinion, devoid of religious conscience or purpose, and abandoned in life. It has won its

place as one of the leading factors in the sum of the world's religious life, and it must be respected and dealt with accordingly.

Addressing ourselves, then, to those who reject Universalism, and especially to those who count it their duty to oppose it, we demand — by every law of what is gentlemanly, courteous, Christian, — nay, by every law of simple decency, have we not a right to demand? — that they honorably accept the facts, and understanding what UNIVERSALISM is and who we are, henceforth in the new departure suggested, treat it and us with the Candor and Truthfulness to which we are entitled, — ceasing their aspersions on our characters; according us the Christian recognition which belongs to us; fairly stating our position; honestly dealing with our fundamental principles, and making their attacks, 'man-fashion,' on our citadel, instead of keeping up a boyish fusillade against anybody's personal outworks, and trying in the smoke and noise to make-believe that there is nothing else.

We ask nothing on the score of favor. In no way are we dependent on the countenance of these friends who so insist on treating us as heathen and outlaws. We court none of their patronage, and should resent any attempt to patronize us should they make it. Alike their smiles and their fellowship, on the one side, and their opposition or contempt, on the other, are no more to us than ours are to them. We feel ourselves in every particular their peers, with a Christian standing as legitimate and unqualified, with every Christian prerogative as much beyond question — entitled to expect from them all that they can properly expect from us, or from each other. Are they Christians? so are we. Are they believers in God and lovers of man? so are we. Are they laborers for the world's redemption? so are we. Are they ministers of the cross? We are more, because ministers of a cross omnipotent, preaching a Saviour who can know neither failure nor defeat — in faith more abundant; in expectations larger and more exultant; in assurance of victory more complete. In no sense more than they are we 'strangers and foreigners' in the Christian camp. By birth, inheritance, conviction, as much as they, we are "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the house-

hold of God, and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." We claim, therefore, only our equal rights. We ask for simple justice, as Christians among Christians.

Nor is it, mainly, for any reason personal to ourselves that we make this demand. We make it in behalf of the Christian cause. Men are nothing. Christ is everything. And for the sake of Christ, now in his Church so divided, dishonored, weakened, by these petty tests, by these partisan alienations, by these unauthorized lines of division and exclusion, we protest against these things, and for ourselves and others demand that his law of fellowship be the only one known among his professed friends. He builds his Church *on the rock of his Messiahship as the Son of God;* and whoever stands on this is a member of his body, entitled to the sympathy and fellowship of every other member as a brother in the Lord. Sects and parties *as such* may establish whatever terms of fellowship they choose, and, building whatever walls they wish, may admit or exclude whomsoever they will. But when it comes to the broad question of membership in the Church of Christ, every one of these walls must fall, and every one of these private tests give way. To be entitled to recognition as a Methodist, a Presbyterian, an Episcopalian or a Universalist, is one thing; to be entitled to recognition as a CHRISTIAN is quite another; and whoever, in the narrowness of his sectarian spirit, assumes to set up his particular walls as the walls of Christ's Church, and to say that only those who use his private passwords and accept his creed, are to be acknowledged as Christians, invades the liberty of every Christian soul, and insolently dares to put himself in place of Christ.

Already, we are glad to see, able and catholic men, perceiving the soundness of this principle, are pushing the question whether it is expedient or Christian longer to deny us what, on such a basis, is so indisputably our due. Such a re-action and debate are only what we have always been sure would at some time come. The sentiment of justice may for a while slumber, but it never fails at length to assert itself. Our demand is that the agitation go on until our rightful place is confessed; and if, so undeniably equitable as our

claim is, those who call themselves 'the church evangelical' will not take this new departure, and give us what they no longer have even the semblance of an excuse for denying, the motive will not fail to be understood, and on them will fall the consequences. They will be crushed under the wheels of an advancing Christian sentiment, while 'the world' will accord to us what a besotted and recreant Church withholds. With confidence, we 'bide our time' and wait the issue.

II. Loyalty. Reference was made in our second chapter to those who, believing Universalism, are identifying themselves with other churches, or, worse still, drifting outside all churches, without religious association anywhere. It is one of our great misfortunes that there are so many such. Rev. W. E. Manley, in a recent communication to one of our papers, describing an interview with the late General Winfield Scott, reports him as saying, "I do not see how any man can read the Bible, and not be a Universalist. I am an Episcopalian because I was born and brought up in that church; but I don't believe their dogmas." Who with any considerable acquaintance, does not know scores, — possibly hundreds, whose position is thus substantially described? Visiting one of the finest and most extensive establishments in the city of my residence, shortly after taking my present charge, I congratulated the proprietor on his success, and received this reply: "All I have here achieved has been built up on the principles of Universalism — God the universal Father, and all men brethren." And yet this man, an avowed Universalist, and thus recognizing his obligation to put his faith into his *business*, though he knows how much Universalism in Philadelphia is needing him and all like him, is a member of a Methodist church, the teacher of a Bible class in a Methodist Sunday-school, and one of the active and generous leaders of a Methodist congregation, putting his children into associations in which they are being trained away from what he advocates as truth; helping to keep in countenance the assumptions which exclude his fellow-believers from Christian recognition; and contributing all he has and is to the support and furtherance

of what he pronounces a gross perversion of the Gospel! The most busy and *talkative* Universalist whom I have met in Philadelphia never comes near our churches, but identifies himself with the Episcopalians, throwing whatever social influence he has into their scale, and against what he is so busily fond of talking about as the truth! And in a conversation with me once, he named several of the most prominent Episcopal churches of our city, saying that *one half* of the congregation of one, *a third* of another, and *a quarter part* of still another were, to his certain knowledge, undisguised Universalists, and that all the churches were full of them!

And these men, and all these people, as every intelligent person knows, are but representatives of multitudes all over the land. Even 'evangelical' pulpits are not without such. A Methodist minister came to me not long ago, avowing himself a Universalist, and desiring a comparison of views. I urged him to be an honest man and put himself before the world as his conclusions required; but subsequently, returning some books I had loaned him, he sent me a note, in which, though reiterating his faith in Universalism, he said, "I am bound by virtue of some pecuniary aid I received while preparing for the ministry, to be a Methodist Episcopal minister, and I am not able to make good the money, which I must do, with interest, if I leave the Methodist Episcopal church." So he remains in the Methodist ministry; but he could not close his note without revealing a consciousness of his false position by "hoping" that I would "be charitable" towards him, and that he had "not fallen in my estimation because of the course that he was *in honor* (!) bound to take"! Nor, I have reason to be well assured, is he the only Universalist in the Methodist ministry. There are many like him. Other churches are in a similar condition. A young man recently left our ministry for the Episcopalians, distinctly certifying the Bishop, as I am informed, that in no particular had his opinions changed, but that he was pleased with their forms, and thought he could be happy in their work. He is at present an Episcopal pastor in Philadelphia. But why multiply examples?

The time was when to identify one's self with a given denomination, in the pulpit or the pews, indicated an accept-

ance of the creed of that denomination. But such identification is no longer evidence to this effect. Said the Methodist minister above referred to, in his note to me, "As the great object of preaching is the improvement of mankind, I hope that I may do good in whatever church I labor" — as if 'the improvement of mankind' did not require *the preaching of the truth*, and as if what one believes, or whether the church in which he labors stands for what he believes, were a question not worth the asking! And in much the same spirit, the idea has come strangely to prevail that if one 'tries to do about right,' it matters nothing what 'meeting' he attends, or in what pulpit he preaches, or whether he sincerely holds or preaches the doctrines of the Church with which he is connected or not! In fact, public sentiment has become shamefully debauched in regard to this subject. Anything like absolute responsibility to what is believed to be religious truth is, to a fearful extent, ignored; and Pilate's question, if not in so many words, and in his sneering contempt for a thing so impalpable, is, virtually, and in much of his utter unconcern, the question of a host of people to-day, "What's truth" compared with fashion, or popularity, or convenience, or fancy, or any whim or indifference that may chance to take us?

"An Orthodox Minister," in a recent magazine article of no small significance, arraigns the whole 'orthodox Protestant' church as full of defection from the creeds, and says, "There can be no doubt that there are thousands in the Protestant churches to-day, who, if required publicly to renew the same confession of faith which they made when they first entered the church, could not do it conscientiously. But the church accepts their external adherence, though cognizant of their heart-defection, and thus becomes a *particeps criminis* to a system of deceit which effectually undermines all integrity of character, sacrificing that for which alone the church was established, for the sake of an appearance of doctrinal soundness; preserving the shell, but destroying the kernel; debauching the conscience for the sake of preserving the creed intact." * Does anybody

* Scribner's, for July, 1873, p. 298.

doubt that the most of this apostasy is in the direction of Universalism, more or less pronounced? There is probably not a single Protestant sect without Universalists in its ministry; and it is doubtful if there is a congregation of any Protestant name, particularly in those portions of the country where the leaven of our principles has been at all diffused, that has not more or less Universalists in it, while, like the Episcopal churches in Philadelphia which have been alluded to, many would show large numbers of them. And when to these we add the other class, — probably as many more, who, while theoretically with us, are religiously homeless, helping to swell the vast throng of 'the unchurched,' we have a condition of things which may well arrest attention, astounding every honest mind, and which, as we reflect upon it, shows the occasion we have to protest and appeal for its correction. Every day, the inquiry more seriously presses, How shall these disloyal multitudes be reached and awakened to see how weak, how dishonorable, how wrong their false position is?

So far, then, as I can secure their hearing, I address myself to these multitudes in the name of the truth they are defrauding, and of the Church to which their sympathy and service should be given, calling them to a new departure.

I plead with them to look at what they are doing, in the light of its consequences. Not to speak of the suspicion and dishonor that *would* be brought upon the faith thus treacherously held by the failure of so many to perceive any moral or religious meaning in it, or to catch from it any hint of obligation to it, were it not that Christ himself had just such disciples, and that no form of Christian doctrine can plead exemption from such believers, I ask them, first, to consider how much is lost to the truth, and to all the interests which the truth concerns, in the faithlessness of so many thousands, whose numbers, wealth, intelligence and social standing would so re-enforce our Church, and at once increase its power! Give to Universalism all that thus, in common honesty, belongs to it, and straightway, not twofold simply, but tenfold at least would its weight as an organized religious force be augmented. Then, on the other hand, I appeal to those in other churches who should be with us, to consider what

a fictitious show of strength is imparted to error, and how its hold upon the popular faith and sympathy is made to seem so much more than it actually is, — and what a preponderance of ecclesiastical and religious influence, which in no way belongs to it, is thus given it, — and what a most improper advantage is accorded to it as such multitudes of children are placed in its hands for education, by parents who have themselves repudiated it, — and how the progress of truth is hindered and postponed by those who should be its friends, as, in manifold ways, they become the allies and helpers of doctrines which they have not only rejected, but which they profess to abhor, — and how thus the dominion of error is prolonged, and souls caused to suffer, and the deepest life of the world denied the ministries it needs! And then, turning to the homeless drifters, who should be in our churches, but who permit themselves to be dissipated among the non-religious, — many of them among the irreligious, elements of our communities, I ask them to consider how they are helping, though professing sympathy with religious ideas, to multiply and strengthen the agencies that are at work to break up all churches and to disintegrate Christian society itself, while their children go their way, to be trained in false conceptions of God and the Gospel, or to run loose without any religious training — the 'gamins' of our respectable Christendom!

Will anybody say that all these are things of no account, — to be made light of, or to be suffered to go on, with no sense of condemnation because of them on the part of those to whose charge they are to be laid, and with no effort towards remedy by those who witness them? Are they not, on the contrary, things of grave and threatening import? And should not all who love loyalty and justice, of whatever creed, cry out against them, and do not you who are responsible for them owe it to yourselves, and your children, and truth, and the world, and all that is involved, to review the whole subject, and to resolve on an immediate departure in the direction of honor and honesty, that will put you in your true relations?

But there is something deeper and more serious than mere consequences for these disloyalists, whether in or out

of other churches, to think of in regard to this subject, viz., the principles which their disloyalty ignores. Consequences are largely on the surface. Principles are substantive and central. Consequences we may sometimes disregard. Principles never. Loyalty is simple fidelity; and the obligations to fidelity are universal. On no possible plea can any man or woman for a moment be justified in excepting his or her opinions from the sweep of these obligations, or in thinking fidelity less a binding or solemn duty with reference to opinion than with reference to country, or family, or plighted faith of any sort. What is owed to Opinion is as actual a debt as what is owed to the butcher or the baker. All moral obligations have finally the same roots; and no man is a true man who is false to any of them. Honesty, if real, is absolute, pertaining to the whole substance of a man's life — as fineness and strength pertain not to spots of a piece of cloth, but to the whole web, if it is fine and strong. Show me a man dishonest in one thing, even the least, and I will show you a man who, on sufficient occasion, will be dishonest in anything. An honest man is not a man honest in some relations, or in reference to some trusts, but a man honest through and through, — in all relations, in reference to all trusts; honest towards God as well as towards man; honest in things innermost as well as things outermost. A vase is marred, wherever or however cracked. So is integrity. It is integrity only so long as it is complete. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all."

Will any one dispute these statements as statements of principle? If not, it is easy to see what follows. The obligations to Opinion are of precisely the same nature as those imposed by any other trust, and disloyalty to them, therefore, is in essence the same as treason to one's country, or as bad faith, treachery, disloyalty in business, in politics, in friendship, in anything else. It is falseness. It is dishonesty. Is it not worth while, then, for you who are thus disloyal to consider in whose company you are? There is, so far as I know, but one opinion of Judas and Arnold. Would it not be well for you who are helping to swell the verdict against these men, and who would feel

insulted and indignant to be suspected of disloyalty to patriotism, to friends, to any domestic or social obligation, and who are yet every day, in your treachery to what you hold as truth, practising a faithlessness quite as culpable in God's sight, to try to see yourselves, in such a comparison, as God and all brave and noble minds see you?

Opinions are unseen and impalpable, it is true. But a trust is a trust, be it what it may. Should some person place in the hands of any one of you people, so faithlessly holding Universalism, a hundred dollars for the relief of the poor, or for any other specific purpose, and he should put it unused into his pocket, or in any way prove recreant to the stewardship, how many of you all would think it a matter of no importance, or hesitate to say, He is a dishonest man? But is recreancy to truth — or what is believed to be truth — less a dishonesty, because truth cannot be weighed or counted? Is falsity of position as to one's convictions less a falsity, because convictions cannot be handled or seen? Is good faith, is loyalty, conditioned on the material substance or avoirdupois of things, and not on their essence? So evidently judged my ministerial Methodist acquaintance, since he felt "*in honor* bound" to think a great deal of the money men had loaned him, and nothing of the truth God had given him! And on this point he but illustrates the judgment of the entire class he represents.

How much such need to think what opinions are! "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." Ideas, opinions rule the world. Impalpable, unseen though they are, they underlie all things, and are the seed of God's grandest harvests. As such, there is no other trust so sacred. How else could one be justified in holding them at the price of martyrdom? Finally, indeed, there is nothing in this world but ideas; and in the last analysis, there is neither permanence nor power in anything but *religious* ideas. Religion being the life of souls, if the world is ever to be regenerated, it is to be by means of religious truth, — if Christianity be from God, by means of Christian truth. How solemn, then, the interests with which one trifles, — how grave the disloyalty of which he is guilty, who, having decided convictions touching any

question of Christian doctrine, conceals, deserts, or, on any plea, proves faithless to them! What disloyalty so criminal? or which one of you all, practising it, can tell how many lives you are helping to poison, or how wide or disastrous the consequences of your faithlessness are to be? "If any man come to me," said Christ, "and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." What was this but saying, in effect, that loyalty to opinion must be held the supreme duty? and what would he who spoke these words say to you who, professing faith in him, are for any reason proving false to your faith, could he speak to you to-day? Better, if the choice *must* be made, desertion of friends, and disloyalty to country, and a disregard of all human relations, than treachery to this supreme trust of truth.

Applying to every opinion sincerely held, all this has special force in respect to Universalism. All trusts are sacred, but some place us under special obligation; and when we consider what Universalism is, — the deplorable results, theoretical and practical, of the theology it aims to supplant, — the influences which are conspiring against it, and all that helps to make up the case, we cannot fail to see that it is such a trust.

Looking at what it would displace, we see this. For those professing to believe the traditional theology of the Church, I have only words of kindness and — so far as they give evidence of sincerity — respect. Nor can we doubt that, with its many errors, this theology has elements of truth which have done much good service. But speaking of its radical and characteristic principles, if God is good, and Universalism be true, what is there falser or more pernicious? Let its own deponents answer. Dr. Lyman Beecher and authorities no less eminent long ago confessed that nearly all the infidelity of Christendom is to be attributed to it. Catharine Beecher and hosts of like impartial witnesses have told us how God has been made abhorrent, and religion distasteful, by it. Albert Barnes and similar sufferers, giving voice to their travail and agony, tell us that it makes the universe "all dark, dark, dark" to them, and

that they find no relief from the anguish and torture which it occasions. And besides these, the sad records of insanity and suicide present themselves in terrible testimony against it; while the prevalent neglect of religion, and the formal pietism of which there is so much in the Church, and the material and mercenary conceptions of a good life, and of the motives thereto, so current, no less attest its perverting and corrupting work. Except sin, I know of nothing that so blasts and crushes, that so corrodes and agonizes, that so makes life a suspense and a torment, and death a horror, when its real principles are taken home, and come to fruit.

Is all this nothing? or can one, in view of facts like these, — facts undeniable, — be held as guilty of no wrong in counting them nothing, and, while himself disbelieving the errors thus arraigned, in allowing his children to be educated in them, or in making himself in any way a party to the continuance of their corrupting and tragic sway? Who will dare so affirm? Let those who believe this theology be faithful to it; and let us thank God for the earnest and saintly souls who, professing it, are able to draw life from the Saviour, and nutriment and inspiration from the Gospel, in spite of it. But being what it is, — with such a history as to what it has done, and such a record as to what, so far as it still retains any hold on heads or hearts, it is doing, — there is no duty more solemn or imperative for those emancipated from it than to wash their hands of all complicity with it. By all means, let us cultivate the most kindly and catholic relations with its believers. Though so mistaken, they are none the less our brethren and sisters in Christ, and many of them are setting us examples of a consecrated and fervent piety which we may well imitate. As our brothers and sisters in Christ, let us be ready to co-operate with them in every Christian endeavor; but to all inducements or pleas towards any sympathetic identification with them in the direct or indirect support of their creeds, the one answer should be, "O, my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united." All words are poor to express what seems to me not simply the inconsistency, but the sin of those who say or do otherwise. For *what* are they doing? It would be

bad enough if they were encouraging merely innoxious errors. But they are doing far worse. They are helping to maintain and diffuse errors that have, for centuries, been sapping the faith of Christendom, and infusing false and venal motives into every popular conception of religion. They are helping to give prevalence and permanence to what, as they believe, misrepresents the character of God, dims the glory of Christ, impairs the efficacy of the Gospel, detracts from the power of the Cross, and that has torn more hearts, and withered more hopes, and corrupted more lives, and mantled more souls in the gloom of despair than — with the single exception named — any other cause. They are thus helping to conserve what they should count it their solemn duty to God and man to correct and destroy.

Does some one say, The minister I support is 'liberal,' and does not at all offensively preach his creed? Then the more shame for the minister, and for every Universalist found among his supporters. Herein is one of the unfavorable conditions under which we have to labor. 'Orthodoxy' has, to a wide extent, ceased to be frank and honest. Greatly modified it has been, and, as was said in our first chapter, the creeds as formerly held are, every year, being put more and more out of the thought and faith of the people. Thank God for the tendencies which are thus gradually making an end of them, and for the drift in which any minister is, in any actual sense, becoming more 'liberal' and Christian in the substance of his faith. But so far as the old faith at all lingers, let us have it from every pulpit *just as it is held.* The ground of complaint now is that even these modified creeds are sugar-coated by too many who pretend to preach them. Public taste, if not public sentiment, has got beyond them, and so the sulphur is made to burn without the old blue or the ancient odor. What a thinning out of 'evangelical' churches, and what a corresponding filling up of ours, we should see, were it not so! The Episcopal church in Philadelphia, said by the *talkative* Universalist to whom I have referred to have a congregation one half Universalists, recently changed pastors. The new-comer was moved to be honest, and in a very explicit way preached the doctrines of the church, whereupon — so I was assured — he was no-

tified that he must cease such preaching, or that he or a large part of the congregation would leave. He has not left, and I have not heard that the congregation has seriously diminished — from which the inference is clear. What shall be said either of such a minister, or such a congregation? or what shall be said of those openly or secretly believing Universalism who become parties to such insincerity?

Away with all concealment, or "daubing with untempered mortar"! The doctrine of endless woe is either true or false. If true, it is not a thing to be withheld, disguised, or toyed with. It should be preached, distinctly, unmistakably, constantly, in pulpits, at funerals, at every possible opportunity to alarm souls; and he who, pretending to think it true, fails so to preach it, is a trifler and a time-serving traitor to his hearers; and were it possible that it could prove true, every such dainty and treacherous trifler would go up to the throne of God at death with the blood of souls, lost through his unfaithfulness, dripping from his hands, to deserve the hottest place in the hell to which they would be doomed. When shall we have the real character of such men understood? How nobly contrasts with them the conscientious and plain-spoken minister who said, "I was dismissed because I could not preach Universalist sermons at funerals"!

And the spirit of all this applies equally to those who, having adopted Universalist conclusions, are willing, under any pretext, to occupy 'evangelical' pulpits, ostensibly committed to 'evangelical' doctrines. How can such men stand up before God and their congregations in prayer, or use the name of the pure Christ, without being crushed under a sense of their duplicity, or feeling that their pulpit floors are likely, at any moment, to open beneath them? Think of Paul, after having been met by the Master and brought to a knowledge of the truth, as concealing his conversion, and continuing to labor as if he were a Pharisee as before! Think of John, or Peter, or any of the Apostles, as pursuing such a course! The very thought is an insult to them. And yet these men of to-day, professing to stand in place of Paul and Peter and the rest, are practising a

hypocrisy and a double-dealing which would have made the Apostles a hissing and a by-word. Is what would have been so base in Apostles manly and creditable in their successors?

But, special as are the claims of Universalism on the loyalty of all who accept it, considering the errors it would supplant, and the wrong of concealing these errors when they are held as truth, or of supporting or seeming to hold them when they have been renounced, these claims are, if possible, immeasurably intensified when we consider what it is in itself. I have already sufficiently said what it is, if it be the truth. There is nothing else so grand or precious. It is light. It is consolation. It is encouragement. It is spiritual power. It is fulness of peace. And the day of millennial glory will never come till its principles are perceived and its spirit diffused, rendering it the life of all souls. We talk of the importance of our republic. And it *is* important. I know of no simply human trust so momentous. But what is any mere form of government compared with this Gospel of God's universal love and omnipotent grace? Blot out these institutions of ours from among the nations, and what has been done in comparison with what would follow were this central sun of truth blotted from the religious heavens? Dear, and justly dear, as our republic is to every American or Christian heart, dearer far, unutterably dearer, should this Gospel be to us; and, shameful as would be the treachery of any man against a government freighted with so much of inestimable worth to the civilization and progress of the world, still more shameful is, I believe, in the sight of God, and should be in the sight of all honest men, the disloyalty of those who, believing this Gospel, are, directly or indirectly, allowing themselves to be numbered against it — more shameful because this, in its principles, underlies not only all right government, all beneficent institutions, and all noble being or doing, but all faith in God, and all hope for man.

Have we not a right, then, to appeal to you, the thousands now in so false a position in respect to what you believe as truth, and am I doing more than my duty in holding up this word, LOYALTY, before you, and, in the name of all

that is manly and just, pleading with you to make the new departure on which, if you would be really honest men and women, deserving the world's respect or God's approval, you should at once enter? I know the excuses offered and the causes at work in connection with this subject. I know the strength of social ties. I know the power of 'respectability' and fashion. I know the force of all those currents of influence which are sweeping away from us towards more 'popular' churches, and away from all churches into indifference, or religious homelessness and vagabondism. But I know also that, as not one of these considerations weighs so much as an atom of dust in God's scales towards justifying the disloyalty in behalf of which they are pleaded, so neither will they have the force of a burnt straw to hold any true man or woman away from the Church to which his or her sympathy and support should be given.

This, it is time that it should be understood, is not a question of personal preference, or convenience, or taste, or position, or social or business interest. Like all questions of duty, it is simply a question between God and the soul: a question of honor; a question of manhood or womanhood; a question of integrity and right. No person is so rich as to be superior to the obligations it involves; none so humble or poor as to be absolved from its demands. "Where do you propose to go to church?" asked wealthy friends of a noble man, — one of the members of my Church, now in weakness sailing out to the unseen sea, — on his removal to Philadelphia. "To the Universalist Church, if I can find one," was the reply. "O, but *that* is not fashionable or popular *here*," said the friends. "No matter whether it is fashionable or not," came the manly response. "It is my Church, and I shall go to it, though its service be in a barn." In that spoke A MAN, as every true MAN, conscious of God and wishing to maintain his own integrity, will speak in answer to all possible pleas or excuses for supporting what he does not believe, or for going where he is out of place, or for going nowhere.

There is but one course for a man who would be truthful, — and that is, always to speak the truth, though the heavens fall. And for the same reason, there is but one course for

those believing Universalism, if they would preserve their self-respect, and be able without shame to think of God, or to look the world in the face, — and that is, to be loyal to their convictions, at whatever cost. Is Universalism unfashionable or unpopular where you live? Give all you are or have to it, and help to make it fashionable and popular. "Universalism is not respectable," sneeringly said somebody in a crowded horse-car, in Philadelphia — to which remark there was, all round, a general nodding of assent. "Gentlemen," said the same noble man just referred to, rising from his seat — a man known of all to be second to no other as a high-toned and Christian merchant, "Gentlemen, am I respectable? *I am a Universalist.*" There was no more talk about the non-respectability of Universalism in that car. In like manner should all Universalists, in the pulpit or out of the pulpit, honor themselves and their faith. Is Universalism unable in your community to boast of wealth or numbers? Put yourselves and your families and whatever money or position you command into its scale. Are companions or friends indisposed to go where it is preached? Let your word be, Go where you prefer; but as for me, let my right hand forget its cunning if I forget the faith or the Church to which my service is due. Is there no Universalist church where you live? Do the most in your power, at the earliest moment possible, to have one, putting yourselves, meanwhile, into living connection with the nearest church of your faith available to you. Have you, if you are a minister, a good position where you are, and are you doubtful what will come to you if you avow yourself, and change your relations? No matter; be an honest man, following the behest of God in the call of His truth, like Abraham, who "went out, not knowing whither he went;" like Paul, who went "bound in the spirit to Jerusalem," not knowing what should befall him there, only assured that bonds and afflictions awaited him, but saying, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself." In one word, believing Universalism, be loyal to it, as the patriot is loyal to his country; as the lover is loyal to his mistress; as the saint is loyal to his God. In Paul's words to the Corinthians, and as the Lord

Christ would say, could he speak to you out of heaven, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong."

How but by such steadfastness and fidelity has truth ever advanced, or humanity been carried forward? It seems a small thing to you, O man or woman disloyal to the victorious Christ and the Gospel of universal redemption, living amidst all that the sufferings of Christ and the fidelity of faithful souls have given you, to turn your back upon the truth, to conceal your convictions, to play false with God and give support to what you believe to be error; but how empty would history be of heroism, and how barren of all the grandest results it now records, had all been like you! Where, bethink you, I pray, where would the world have been to-day but for the consciousness of Responsibility to Opinion, which has possessed and moved souls, through the ages, animating them to noble doing and daring for Truth's sake? Loyalty to ideas, — fidelity to honest conviction, — the purpose at all hazards to put one's self unflinchingly where one morally and intellectually belongs — what but this has given us heroes and martyrs, illuminated the otherwise dim annals of our race with the most chivalric self-sacrifice, destroyed old errors, lifted fresh truths into victory, and so kept the wheels of the world's progress in motion? If all on whose eyes the light of new truth has dawned, and to whom advanced and unpopular convictions have come, had been as insensible to duty in this regard as some have always been, and as you now are, you would to-day have been savage wanderers in some wilderness, bowing before some stock or stone in worship, and in place of all this splendid sum of results which we call Christian Civilization, there would have been no Christ, no Cross, no Conquered Grave, no toiling Apostles, no saintly confessors, suffering for your sake and mine, — nothing of the fruitage that is, or of the more glorious fruitage yet to be, — only the dearth and darkness of an utter barbarism. Ideas, convictions, bravely held, confessed or proclaimed in face of penalty, obloquy, death, — lived for, — died for, — these it is that underlie all this fair structure which we see, and that have put us where we are, and made the life of humanity, in its

best things, what it is ; and whoever, man or woman, having any conviction really held, and especially a moral or religious conviction, is not honest towards it, does not announce it, does not seek identity with its friends, does not stand by it at whatever peril, and work for it, proves false to the law by which alone the world's growth proceeds, and deals dishonorably alike with the God who gives the truth, with the brave souls who have sought to serve it in the past, and with all who are concerned to possess it in the future.

O brothers and sisters, whoever, whatever, wherever you are, thus disloyal now, will you not, if you have any stuff of manhood or womanhood in you, awaken to a sense of these things, and with conscience alive, and self-respect asserting itself, enter on the new departure for which I plead, and, whatever the ties that now hold you, or the considerations that now influence you, for Christ's sake, for your own sake, for your children's sake, for the world's sake, resolve henceforth to put yourselves where you belong ?

III. Ignition. Whatever Christianity proposes, it proposes as a ministry of Divine quickening. The baptism of Christ is a baptism of 'the Holy Ghost *and of fire ;*' and accompanying the Pentecostal outpouring of the spirit, 'tongues *like as of fire*' appeared. The symbol doubtless had incidental meanings ; but it significantly tells at what Christianity aims. "*Light enough, but no heat,*" is the crisp phrase in which Wendell Phillips once explained the failure of all heathen systems and philosophies to give life. Christianity supplies this lack. Its business is to set souls spiritually on fire, melting them into contrition, kindling them to enthusiasm, and filling them with the glow of all holy emotion and purpose. Christ's own being, therefore — calm and undemonstrative as he was, was all aglow with the fires of Divine love and truth. Every Apostle flamed with faith, enthusiasm, and devout assurance and consecration. And if, anywhere, since, there have been those, high or humble, who, in Christ's name, have been in any degree earnest, saintly, heroic, it has been solely because, whatever their

belief, or however they may have argued, they have also *felt* Christianity, and have been so far kindled and set spiritually to burning by it. In steam-engines, other things being equal, power is always in the ratio of fuel consumed. So, by a like law, in life, spiritual power is proportionate to the substance of truth fused in the soul. And illustrating how Christianity seeks to affect us, these things in the past indicate what must be in the future, if its work is at all effectually to proceed. The world is to be redeemed, not by dogma or debate, — only as thought is melted into feeling and purpose, and as the flame thus kindled spreads from soul to soul, from church to church, quickening our whole humanity into one universal glow of love, adoration and child-like service. Life only can give life.

What fact or thought, then, so fit as this wherewith to end these pages? These several chapters are the children of my brain; but they are even more the outpouring of my heart. I believe Universalism, my faith in it being identical with my faith in God. I love the Universalist Church, believing in its future as confidently as I believe in the future of Christianity itself. I see in it the leaven which is, ultimately, to leaven all Christendom; the stone that is to smite every image of error, and to become a great mountain, filling the whole earth. It is, therefore, I believe, the Providential agency which is not only to bring the entire Church into agreement with the truth, but which is to attract and organize in allegiance to Christ the vast multitude of souls, sickening of the creeds and temporarily drifting from all positive faith and religious ideas. But this future of our Church, I equally believe, is not possible in the line of much of our present thinking and methods; is contingent upon an utter renunciation of various errors now prevalent among us, — upon a clearer perception of truths now held only as half-truths, and so held, if not for evil, certainly for no good, — and upon a deeper and intenser religious experience and a higher order of spiritual life. And these last, I no less believe, are to be attained only through a more vital and inseeing appreciation and a closer and more pungent and personal administration of the Gospel as an awakening, converting and consecrating power.

So believing, it is the one desire of my life to see these conditions fulfilled, and our Church realizing its proffered destiny. This book is the result. It is a contribution towards an attempt to help on an end for which we are all praying. And now, approaching its close, not without some concern as to whether it is at all to answer the purpose for which only I have written it, as I look back over the themes I have tried to discuss, and forward to our future, — as, especially, having spoken to those in opposition, and to those disloyal, I turn, finally, to those who are the active and contributing constituency of our Church, organized or scattered, and, reflecting on what we have and are, and on what we *must have* if we are to live, query how far they, — rather, how far *we*, are to prove duly considerate of what is demanded of us, and equal to it, no word in the language comes to me as so well summing up all our needs in one, as this word, IGNITION. It is not a word often used in such a connection, — I do not know that I ever saw it so used; but it is none the less — possibly it is all the more — fitting on this account for the service here appointed it.

The burden of all these pages is that the time has come for an advance of our whole Church, not simply into methods and appeals more consonant with our predominant conclusions, but on to altogether higher ground spiritually, in more pronounced and earnest labor for the conversion and salvation of souls, and the systematic cultivation of the religious life. As I have not failed to intimate at every suitable point, there are many things to be said greatly to our credit, and we have numerous reasons for encouragement and thanksgiving. We have brain, thought, argument. We have money, schools, intelligence. We have large and kindly hearts, and a most reputable benevolence and uprightness. We have thus many of the conditions for becoming a mighty and effective Church already in the process of fulfilment. But — and in saying this I shall only be repeating what has been implied or said on every page preceding — spiritually we are not alive as we should be. Souls are not kindled. Hearts are not aglow. We scarcely begin as yet to be penetrated by any proper consciousness of what Universalism means. We do not at all commen-

surately feel what, in it, God has given to our charge, nor what there is for us, under God and the leadership of Christ, to do for our own salvation, or for the salvation of others.

I speak, of course, of the rule. Those there have been and are, profoundly alive to all these things, — hearts fervid, glowing, consecrated, showing every day what Universalism duly appreciated and experienced would make of us all. But how few such, comparatively ! — though not few in the aggregate. Mainly, Universalism is accepted and held with sole reference to its letter. It is a theory. It is a doctrine. It is an arraignment and challenge of other creeds ; a denial ; an attack ; a controversy ; an argument ; a shell of statements. Or, it is simply a certificate of final safety for everybody ; a proclamation of God's impartial love and of Christ's certain triumph in getting the whole world into heaven. What is implied back of and underneath all this is little considered. We fail, therefore, of the quickening and inspiration we should get from it. We are not warmed, fused, made spiritually fluent and forceful by it. The baptism of fire does not come, as it ought to come, upon us through it. Hence coldness, lack of life, waste of opportunity, loss of power. We need vivification. We need that the rays of the Sun of Righteousness shall strike down to the roots of our being, penetrating us with kindling and life-giving energy. Beneath the letter, we need to perceive and catch the spirit, that we may be set on fire by it ; and we shall never personally know what Universalism is, nor can our Church ever become spiritually electric and mighty, until we are.

Assuming nothing, then, — speaking only as from the ranks, as a fellow-believer and a humble laborer with you for what is so worthy of our love, may I address myself, frankly, earnestly, to you, brothers and sisters of the Universalist Church of America, wherever or whoever you may be, and as my final word touching this New Departure which I have been trying to further, plead with you, by all that is precious in our faith, and by all that is at stake upon your spiritual life, to consider what this word, Ignition, means, and to seek henceforth to have its meaning fulfilled among us ? You will agree with me that we want Candor

from our neighbors and friends who reject and oppose Universalism, and that we have a right to demand it. You will equally agree with me that we want LOYALTY from those who, believing Universalism, are now faithless to it, and that we no less have the right to demand it. But are you under less obligation to Universalism than these others? You avow Universalism. You represent it. Its banner is in your hands, its interests in your special keeping. It is strong or weak, it is spiritually effective or fruitless, it will command the world's attention and respect, becoming a confessed power or otherwise, according to what you are and do, and the illustration you thus furnish, or fail to furnish, of what it is able to be and to accomplish as an element of Christian experience and life. If, then, it has a right to the Christian recognition and the fidelity on which we all insist as its due from these others, what has it not a right to demand of us, of *you?* Am I not justified in saying that more even than it needs, or has a right to demand, Candor from the one class, or Loyalty from the other, it needs and has a right to demand IGNITION among you? needs and has a right to demand this *more* than either of these other things, because, important and desirable as they are, our Church is in no sense dependent on them, can live, and grow, and do its work, if it must, without them, while this is vital and indispensable.

Each of the preceding chapters has been a mention of some condition on which, as I believe, our future growth and effectiveness depend. But really, as has been intimated, these and all conditions are summed up in this *one* — that Christ's baptism of fire shall come upon us through the kindling and igniting power of the truth we hold. We need this ignition through and through. But let me mass as much as possible concerning it under two specifications.

1. We require it in respect to *our responsibility.* What *is* our responsibility? It is, as the stewards of God's truth, to give this truth faithful expression and service, for the world's redemption. Till *this* is felt, no conception of our real position and work is possible.

As Universalists, we claim no exclusive possession of the truth. But conceding all we can as to truth among others,

we have in Universalism, if it be not altogether false, the best interpretation of Christianity as Christ taught it which has thus far been reached. Not that, as any of us yet hold it, it is final. The clearest minds among us doubtless have their misconceptions, or somehow fail to see the whole truth without refraction, in its exact relations at every point. But in the doctrine of God's Fatherhood and of man's brotherhood, in the doctrine of Christ's efficiency and of the ultimate unity of human destiny, with what is contained in these as to duty and the means and conditions of salvation, we have what is final, if anything is final. And these doctrines being final, we have in them, for substance, the very Gospel of Christ, for which alike the intellect and heart of man are clamoring, — in which alone is furnished that which can most successfully stem the present incoming tides of materialism and unbelief, and bring to the solid shores of faith the drifting thousands whose rescue in this world is at all possible, and by which can be done for man and the world what nothing else can do.

Think, then, what momentous interests are hanging upon a due realization of these things by us, and upon our fitting appropriation and illustration of a Gospel so precious! Who can exaggerate its importance, or what is depending on our fidelity as its representatives? It is not a mere doctrine *about* salvation, we are to remember, that is in our keeping. It is a redemptive power. It is salvation itself, because a Divine agency for the conversion of individuals and the regeneration of the race; and we have it as God's gift, that, putting it first of all into our own lives for their sanctification, we may each help to put it into the thought and life of the world, to fulfil its redemptive purpose.

What, then, follows? That if the world is at any time, or anywhere, actually to be saved, we, under Christ, serving his truth, have each something to do towards saving it. This is the method of redemption. Christ's subjects become his instruments. For this reason, every Christian, according to the truth he holds, has a share in the saving work. Hence our Lord's words to his disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world." Not, absolutely, that there is no truth, or religious life, outside the

pale of Christian influence, but that the world's hope, religiously, is in Christianity and its believers. Of those, however, to whom much is given, much is required; and this saving work is ours beyond all others, because our trust of truth is so much larger and better. A most unfit and beggarly conclusion, indeed, it would be, for us to vaunt the superior grandeur and excellence of Universalism as we do, and then to live as if it were only so many empty words, and the world were never to be saved, and we had nothing to do towards saving it! The grander the truth, the more saintly the life, and the more Christian the work, demanded as its expression in the world's behalf.

The difficulty — or one of the difficulties — in respect to this subject is, that not only is there a failure to feel how much God has given us in the Gospel, but that there is no sufficient sense of the actual peril of souls and the world on account of error, indifference, unbelief, and sin, and therefore no fitting sense of the reality of their need, or of the demand on us in their behalf. If a building is on fire, and human beings are seen in it exposed to destruction, — if a child is in the water, drowning, or some poor creature is found perishing of starvation, instantly, the appeal being to our senses, we appreciate it, and are stirred to a sense of duty to do what we can to render succor. In the case of those needing the ministry of Christ, and our ministry as his instruments, there is no such vividness of impression. But precisely this is what is wanted. And why may we not have it? True, the appeal is to our moral consciousness, and not to our senses. But who doubts that there is an unseen life more real than the seen? Or who does not know that whatever touches this touches us most keenly, because in the thing most vital? What is any physical exposure or suffering, at its worst, compared with mental agony or a breaking heart? Mind is always more than matter. Souls are always more than bodies. And by so much as this is true, ignorance of God and alienation from Him, spiritual darkness and destitution, the agony of hearts crushed and comfortless, or yearning for light and finding none, the decay of manhood, the waste of moral stamina and force, the insensibility and death of the soul, are really far more

terrible, and ought to stir us to an intenser anxiety to render relief and cure than any bodily peril can.

Why cannot this be understood? Above all, theoretically insisting on the fact in our moral philosophy so constantly and emphatically as we do, why is it not more generally understood and felt among us? Why, but that our convictions are formal instead of vital, — cold and torpid instead of glowing and propelling? Set these convictions, that we so readily talk, rightly to burning within us, and with them the sense of responsibility which they are fitted to kindle, and there could be no such heedlessness or inactivity as now. Feeling our obligation, we should bestir ourselves as sedulously, in our anxiety to live and work for human redemption in Christ, as we now do to extend succor to those in physical peril; and, with our hearts burning as they would burn, we could no more justify ourselves before God, or to our own consciences, for unconcern or indolence, or for doing anything, directly or indirectly, save in the line of purity and Christian living and endeavor, than we could now justify ourselves should we push back the drowning into the water instead of helping them out, or should we fan the flames in which screaming victims were enveloped instead of doing our utmost to extinguish them.

A becoming intensity of feeling, then, in regard to Christ and the reality of his work, and of our obligation to be his helpers — *this*, in a word, is the thing demanded among us. Now, we don't half believe what we profess. Think for a moment of the inconsistency of professing to believe in the salvation of the world through God's truth and grace in His Son, and then living a life that in some way tells every day against the fulfilment of what is so argued for as truth! — of proclaiming that the time is coming when all are lovingly and reverently to delight in God's service, and then living irreverently and profanely! — of talking of the triumph of righteousness, and then helping to create a weak and languid public sentiment concerning intemperance and the habits and business from which it comes, or concerning any evil from which Christ would save, or in any way contributing an example that helps to strengthen sin and Satan, or to hinder the victory of holiness! Conscience needs stir-

ring, conviction needs igniting, in respect to all these things; and could we but have the sense of responsibility that would thus be kindled in a becoming consciousness of what souls and the world are suffering without Christ and his regenerating power, and of the reality of that work of redemption in which, as believers of truths so grand and precious, we are called to participate, we should see an awakening among us that would speedily set us all to thinking, and praying, and living, and working for the fulfilment of our faith, that would very soon make us a power for the salvation of souls beyond anything the world has ever seen.

Ah, if we could but have something of the intensity of Christ's conviction and feeling! Why did he leave the glory he had with his Father, and come down to earth to give himself to this work of human redemption? Or why was all heaven moved with concern at his coming? Or why is there such joy in heaven over every repentant sinner? Why but because, in the light in which they regard it, the need of redemption is seen to be so real, and the importance of the work so great? And should what is so real and important to them seem of small consequence to us? What work of human suggestion can begin to compare with this in the momentousness of its interest, or its claims? And yet, should some earthly dignitary send to us, saying, I am engaged in an important enterprise for the instruction and elevation of my people, and I desire your aid to give it success, who of us would not be proud of the invitation, and be ambitious, in a becoming sense of the importance of the work and of our responsibility, to do all we possibly could to insure the success desired? Shall we the less appreciate such an invitation because it comes from God and His Son, or be less desirous, rightly estimating the greatness of the work and our responsibility, to make of ourselves all that we can as co-workers with them? There is not one of us, not even the feeblest and poorest, to whom God is not saying, I want your help in my effort to save men, or to whom Christ is not sending his pleading message, Will you not work with me for the great end for which I died? Shall we answer, No? Who can tell what shall be the effect of our earnestness and fidelity, in light, redemption, and peace to

souls, on the one hand, or what consequences of sadness and wretchedness shall follow our insensibility and sloth, on the other?

Let no one say that this is pressing things to extremes. It is not pressing things to extremes. It is the literal, practical fact, unless the Gospel be a dream, and Christ a visionary, and the prophesied coming of the kingdom of God the wildest hallucination. Where does God work towards any highest purpose for man except through man? Where are harvests gathered save as man plants and tills? Or, how have ignorance and sin been conquered, or liberty achieved, or any progress in knowledge, or civilization won, save as man has struggled, sacrificed, toiled? Either God is, or He is not, proposing the spiritual enfranchisement and perfection of our race. If He is not, Christianity is false, and we are believing a lie. If He is, the design is to be fulfilled through means; and if through any means, then in part through us, because we have in charge the truth which can best help on the sanctifying process. Any idea or assumption to the contrary is a misconception that needs, first of all, to be burned out of us, as a consciousness of the real fact is set to burning in us. If the grand prophecy of our faith is ever to be accomplished, and truth and righteousness are actually to triumph, the consummation is to be reached, under God, only as we and those like us do the work and fight the battle; and the question we have reason, every day, most anxiously to ask, is, How are we doing what God has assigned us? Is Christ the moral battery of the universe? We are his conductors. Are we electric? Is he the Captain of our salvation? We are his soldiers. Are we rightly waging the contest? If we are not, it is for us to feel, and so far as we are not, we waste his power; subtract from the sum of the moral forces on which the world's redemption depends; help to shadow and drag down souls and the race instead of aiding to illumine and lift them up; and to this extent postpone the hour when Christ shall conquer, and God 'be all in all.'

Who of us, then, does not need to be set on fire by a deeper and intenser comprehension of such a responsibility, that we may be moved to greater warmth of feeling and pur-

pose, and so be impelled to more of earnestness and consecration as the disciples of Christ and laborers with him for the subjugation of evil and the victory of God and good?

2. But not alone in a juster sense of our responsibility, do we need Ignition. Most of all we need it in a juster and more vital appreciation and experience of the spirit and power of our faith. Here is the weak point of all Christendom — a failure to perceive the inmost meanings of Christ, and to have him, a living power, instead of a technical assent, in the soul. It is our weak point with the rest. Can we, just here, have an awakening? If not — this whole book has been an attempt to intimate what must be accepted as the certain conclusion.

God's prices are fixed. Spiritual results can come only from spiritual causes; and if we are to make ourselves further felt to any wide and positive Christian purpose, we must become a people, as the Apostle expresses it, "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The old churches are intrenched in the popular sympathy and attachment, notwithstanding they no longer represent as formerly the current of popular thinking and faith. They have the public ear. They draw the multitudes. Tradition and prestige are theirs. And it is sometimes asked — often with no little concern, as we see how much occasion there is in many communities to consider the question, — How are we to change all this, or to compete with these intrenched churches in securing attention and attracting the people? If we speak of sensational or illegitimate methods, there are many ways to do this. But, legitimately, I know of but one way.

Speaking only in a general, and not in an absolute sense, we have done all we can with Universalism as a *mere* doctrine or theory. Not that there is not a great work for Universalism yet to do in the rectification of opinion. There is. Not that it is to spread no farther as an idea, or as an interpretation of the universe. It is to become the prevalent thought of Christendom. What I mean to say is that we can no longer maintain ourselves as a distinct Church on a mere argumentative or controversial basis, or live and grow on mere dogmatic discussions. Ephraim did not thrive on the east wind. Topics that were once suffi-

cient to crowd our churches, now, save under exceptional circumstances, no longer 'draw.' They have grown familiar; are regarded as 'stale,' and, to a large extent, therefore, have lost their charm. The world's attention is seldom long held by any purely dogmatic issue. There comes a time in every theological or religious reform when the awakening and enlisting force of *mere* doctrine expends itself, and when, if it is to be permanently established as an organized power, in a living and growing church, it must become something more than a protest, an exposition, or an argument; — must become a minister to the spiritual life of the world, or having answered its end, it dies. This time has come with us. So far as we are really doing anything to-day, getting hold of the people and building a Church, we are doing it by virtue of what religious life there is among us, and because of the spiritual power we are putting into our communities.

And this is the one only way of which I just now spoke, for answering the question referred to. How did Paul and Peter and their associates enlist attention to their crucified Christ, and withdraw the people from the divinely appointed, but superseded, religion of Moses, and from the magnificent temples of idolatry and the established power of heathen rituals? How did Peter the Hermit inflame all Europe into such a fever for the crusades, drawing such multitudes away from home and friends and everything that was dear? How did Luther conquer the almost invincible hold of Rome upon the popular mind and heart, and so shake the seven-hilled hierarchy from the despotic domination in which it had thought itself secure? How did the Wesleys succeed, how have any of the world's agitators and reformers succeeded in securing the public ear, and conquering the possession of the public sympathy and faith? How but by a burning enthusiasm? How but by being themselves on fire with that with which they sought to kindle others? How would Christianity have won the place it did, had the Apostles been content with merely disputing in synagogues, or arguing with the Gentiles? They had their doctrines, and arguments, and knew how to use them. But they were no dealers in mere doctrine, or argument. They had them only

as the sun has light and heat — to glow with them, or as a furnace has coals — to burn with them. To them, every doctrine was a sublime fact, and every opinion a vehicle through which the fire of God's truth was communicated to them, that they might communicate it to others for their kindling and salvation. There was not a faculty of their nature, not a precinct of their souls, that was not aflame with the truth they bore. How else could they have faced and endured what they did, or have so wrought even unto death? Or who wonders that men so possessed with a sense of the reality and importance of their message, so pervaded with its indwelling spirit, so burning with the impulse to proclaim it, were a success as to the effect of their ministry, though they sealed their testimony with their blood?

So, if we are to be most profited by what we believe, or if the Universalist Church is to live and become a power, we must be possessed by Universalism; feeling what it is; made fervent, fluid, burning by it; with hearts glowing; with eyes streaming with the light of the Divine flame within. Our work, if we have any permanent work, is not simply to displace old faiths, and dispossess other churches, but to attract those who are now churchless, — multitudes of them without faith, and to transfuse the world with a new life; and if we are to do this, we must ourselves be transfused, showing in our own fervors, in the ardor of our devotion, in the warmth of our zeal, in the glow of our enthusiasm, what we have wherewith to warm, vitalize and save others: — not one minister, nor one church must do this, but all, — by a common awakening, a common purpose, a common opening of hearts to the baptism of fire. There is no other way for us to conquer, or prevail.

I will not here speak of what Universalism has thus to move and kindle us. Enough, perhaps, has been said on these points in previous chapters. But I cannot forbear the remark that nowhere since the Apostles has there been such a spectacle of souls awakened and glowing, or of wise, consecrated, unconquerable living in nearness to Christ, and in blessed experience of what he only can impart, as we should show, if, through insight and consciousness, we could but

be thoroughly ignited to understand and to feel all that this faith bestows and discloses: for to whom else have been given such revelations, such incentives, such appeals, such encouragements? Nothing in connection with this whole subject so surprises, nay, so amazes me, as the fact that there are so many professing to be Universalists, — intelligent people, thoughtful people, good people, most of them, — ready stoutly to insist, theoretically, on the religious power of Universalism, and ready, not a few of them, in their way to work for it, who are so insensible to the grandeur of these revelations, so dead to these appeals, incentives and encouragements, and apparently so lost to any thought that they should be at all moved or kindled by them. They talk Universalism, and talk it well, many of them; but they fail to get anything but mere dogma out of it, as one gets only a bunch of bones in a skeleton's hand.

How much is said among us about *the salvation of the world!* But how many hearts are touched by a sense of what it includes, or by the prospect it opens? Let some good man who has been willing to expose himself to danger for the sake of others, return, bringing them in safety with him, and into what enthusiasm we are all kindled, and how their hearts throb with gratitude towards their deliverer! Let some soldier ride through our streets, bearing the trophies of a battle in which he has conspicuously helped to win victory for the right, and how our pulses beat as we shout his welcome! But here is Christ, with our whole race redeemed and brought home through what he has done and suffered, — here is God, victorious over all the forces of evil, — here are good triumphant, and every human soul helped into purity and blessedness, and all heaven surging with the joy of death destroyed, sin conquered, all mystery solved, all lost ones found, all parted ones united, all pain compensated, and all God's family made one forever in His presence — and pulses beat not! souls glow not! hearts are unkindled, as cold as if all this were a thing of no concern! Think of it! We have here included all that God is as our Father, all that Christ is as our Saviour, all that the Cross is as the symbol of an unconquerable love, all that sin is as our curse, all that heaven is as the perfect answer to

our largest hopes, — and yet men and women, professing to believe it, and arguing and quoting the Bible to prove it, could scarcely be less moved by it, in any penetrating, fusing, experimental way, if it were simply a theory how best to dispose of last year's chaff! What but the baptism of the Holy Ghost can rightly move those so insensible? Or how can we ever be a live and spiritually effective people save as there somehow comes to us an arousing — an opening of eyes, to see what Universalism is, — a quickening of spiritual sensibility, to feel it, — an electric influx, causing thought, emotion, purpose, the whole soul, to be set on fire by it?

Not that we should invite or desire any fever or excitement. The sun makes no 'fuss,' or crackle, in shining. Neither do the trees in growing. Christ made no show. He did not "strive nor cry, neither did any man hear his voice in the streets." He simply felt and glowed. So with the Apostles. So it has been with all who have had Christ deepest and most experimentally in them. So it should be with us. We want no noise; no cheap and boisterous 'gush'; no fanaticism; no showy or overflowing religious effervescence; no 'strange fire.' We want only warmth; sensibilities thoroughly awakened; spiritual perceptions clarified; a fervor and glow of the entire being, as the fires of God's grace and of Christ's self-sacrificing love pervade it, and as the resulting sense of all Divine realities, with the glory that is possible now and the fulness of glory beyond, becomes a sweet experience and joy. This is Christian ignition, by which only can our faith possess us, or can we possess the world. *Shall we have it?*

Shall we have it? This is the one question of this book; and, penning it here for the last time, I do so in confidence and hope, and yet not without solicitude and prayer. For, though I see much as I look over the field to assure and encourage us, yet, as I yield myself to the thoughts which the question suggests, and consider how many things must concur for its right answer, and how much depends, for ourselves, for our country, for the world, on its being so answered, I cannot conceal from myself how

serious it is, nor that there are grounds for some apprehension.

Dwelling for a moment on the question, my mind is busy with our past, our present, our future. Looking back over these years of our first century, I think of the manifest Providence which attended the opening of our history, and of all that has since been done to plant and extend this Church of our love. I reflect on all that has helped to make it what it is, and that not only are we the heirs of the ages, sharing in the results of all the great work of the world's great souls,—apostles, heroes, martyrs, and gathering fruit from the seed which, in blood and tears, they planted, but that we are specially the heirs of the devoted and earnest men who founded and have builded our Church — building themselves, some of them, forever into it. I think of Murray and Winchester and the early Streeters, and Lathe, and Richards, and the rest, whom I never saw. I think of the Ballous, and Turner, and Balfour, and Sebastian Streeter, and Whittemore, and their co-laborers, whom it was my privilege to know, and whose faces hang as unfading pictures in the gallery of my heart. I think of the zeal and sincerity and self-sacrifice which these names, and those of others no less faithful, symbolize, and thus of what has been done to make us what we are, and something of the toil and brain and heart our Church as it exists to-day has cost.

Then, as I consider what is the truth which has thus been served, and how we have ripened in apprehending it, and what an influence has gone out from us, and what we have come to be, and what are the possibilities inviting us to their fulfilment, the query comes, For what has all this been? To what end have these men lived and labored? To what end has this Church so grown in all the resources of church-power? To what end these leavening influences which it has so diffused? To what end these great possibilities? Only that we, and those who are to succeed us, should suffer them to be in vain, or so far in vain that Universalism is to go into history, not as an organized Church, standing through the generations to do permanent work for Christ and the evangelization of the world, but simply as an

ephemeral movement, a temporary means of modifying thought, appearing for a little while, and then passing away? And then, as I reflect what would be lost should this be our end, and how hungering hearts, and eyes blinded with tears, and an unbelieving and sinful world need us, and what momentous consequences are suspended on our continued existence and increasing power, I seem to hear all our ascended saints and worthies, with one voice, appealing to us, and protesting, God forbid that, through the insensibility and faithlessness of those to whom we have bequeathed so great a trust, our toils and sacrifices should come only to such an end! Shall this be their end? This is the question which God, and Christ, and all who have labored in our past, and every interest concerned, are uniting to press upon us as we stand on the threshold of our second century. How will we answer?

A potent and impressive answer was that, so far as one man could answer, given by the solitary Universalist who, in a community doctrinally arrayed against him, conquered prejudice and disarmed opposition, extorting the confession, "We think we might manage his arguments, but we don't know what to do with his life"! It was a life so generous, so pure, so prayerful, so thoughtful and loving towards man, so full of piety towards God, in all things so pervaded by the very flavor of Christ's spirit, and thus so in advance of the lives about him, that it was a constant wonder to those who observed and felt it. Who can tell what came of it for the honor of Christ and the conversion of souls?

God help and quicken us till every Universalist, penetrated in like manner by the spirit of our faith, shall attest its power in a similar life. Then will all questions touching our Future be effectually answered, and our destiny be assured. Then will Universalism become the recognized synonyme of all that is grandest in thought, noblest in aim, purest in life, and most sanctifying in influence; and, giving demonstrative evidence that the life of God is flowing through it, the Universalist Church will go forward into constantly fresh Departures, because into steadily enlarging plans and

widening power — each New Departure taking it on to higher ground, and into more earnest labor in Christ's behalf, until its work below shall be finished in the flowing together of all churches in form, as they should now be one in spirit, and as the Church praying and struggling on earth becomes the Church victorious in heaven.